

Gender representation and equality in EFL textbooks from different cultural environments  
– a comparison of Finnish *Smart Moves 3* and Mexican *Take Care! 2*

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Tämä tutkielma käsittelee sosiaalisen sukupuolen ja tasa-arvon ilmenemistä englannin kielen oppikirjoissa, jotka ovat suunnattu oppijoille hyvin erilaisista kulttuureista: suomalaisesta ja meksikolaisesta. Tutkielma pyrkii selvittämään, millaisia sukupuolen representaatioita esiintyy suomalaisessa *Smart Moves 3* -oppikirjassa sekä meksikolaisessa *Take Care! 2* -oppikirjassa, ja vertaamaan representaatioita toisiinsa sekä käsityksiin sukupuolesta ja stereotyypeistä että tavoitteisiin tasa-arvosta lähdekulttuurinsa huomioon ottaen.

Sukupuolten välinen tasa-arvo on yksi keskeisimmistä poliittisista kysymyksistä eri kulttuureissa, ja koulutus on keskeinen arvomaailman ja käsitysten välittäjä. Kielten, kuten muidenkin aineiden, oppikirjoissa olevat käsitykset yhteiskunnasta ja sen piirteistä välittyvät oppilaalle sekä eksplisiittisesti että implisiittisesti. Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä käsitellään sosiaalista sukupuolta, stereotyyppisiä mies- ja naiskuvia, tasa-arvotavoitteita ja koulutuksen taustatekijöitä kansainvälisesti ja kulttuurikohtaisesti, sekä aiempia tutkimuksia sukupuolesta oppikirjoissa. Teoriapohjassa todetaan sukupuolen tasa-arvo tärkeäksi tavoitteeksi, jonka saavuttamisessa keskeistä on monipuolisten sukupuoliroolien välittäminen ja stereotyyppien välttäminen.

Tutkimus on aineistolähtöisesti toteutettu kvantitatiivinen ja kvalitatiivinen sisällönanalyysi. Siinä tutkitaan miesten ja naisten näkyvyyttä oppikirjoissa, sekä heille annettuja yhteiskunnallisia ja sosiaalisia rooleja. Lopuksi oppikirjoja verrataan toisiinsa, sekä teoriapohjassa esitettyihin kulttuurikohtaisiin eroihin, stereotyyppisiin sekä tasa-arvokäsityksiin.

Tutkimuksessa todettiin, että kumpikaan kirjoista ei onnistu täyttämään täysin tasa-arvon tavoitetta. Suomalaisessa oppikirjassa miehiä esiintyy selkeästi enemmän kuin naisia, kun taas meksikolaisessa oppikirjassa sukupuolet ovat tasaisesti näkyvillä. Sukupuolen representaatiot kirjoissa ovat sekä stereotyyppisiä että niitä rikkovia, ja naiset voivat esiintyä useammin stereotyyppinsä ulkopuolisissa rooleissa kuin miehet. Oppikirjojen välillä ei yleisellä tasolla ole suurta eroa, joten meksikolaisen oppikirjan voisi luokitella olevan tasa-arvoisempi kuin lähdekulttuurissa vallitsevat käsitykset antaisivat olettaa.

Avainsanat: englanninopetus, oppikirjat, sosiaalinen sukupuoli, stereotyyppit, tasa-arvo, Suomi, Meksiko, sisällönanalyysi

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## 1. Introduction and research questions

When studying a language or any other subject at school, we seldom pay attention to the attitudes and opinions presented in the material because we are focused on the contents of the subject. Yet, besides learning the contents, we may also acquire attitudes and opinions on various topics. So, language textbooks do not only teach as vocabulary and grammar along with knowledge about various themes ranging from environmental issues to multiculturalism, but also attitudes. Attitudes presented implicitly or explicitly are a part of what is transmitted (Lähdesmäki 2006, 272). A great portion of this attitudinal learning is subconscious. Subconscious learning plays a key role in how we come to see ourselves and the world around us. The hidden attitudes we adopt often carry a moral weight – which may even conflict with the values and ideas we as a society explicitly strive toward.

This thesis investigates the representation of gender in two English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks from two countries: Finland and Mexico. The textbooks are studied through the guiding value of gender equality. Finland and Mexico both aspire to gender equality in their national law and policy. The countries adhere to the Universal Human Rights Declaration of the UN which clearly prohibits discrimination according to gender (UDHR 1948, Article 1 & 2). In addition to the UN and global goals, also the constitutions of the two countries specifically state gender equality and promoting tolerance and acceptance as their aims. Avoiding gender stereotypes and presenting the two genders in varied societal roles are quoted in the Finnish Government Action Plan for Gender Equality (2012, 22) as important means to achieve the goal of equality:

Learning material has a significant effect on the kind of image of men and women given to the pupils and what kinds of perceptions of different occupations are transmitted to the pupils. Furthermore, learning material should give an unprejudiced and open-minded view of what is appropriate and possible for men and women, and it should not reinforce stereotypical gender roles through texts or illustrations.

(Government Action Plan for Gender Equality. Hallituksen tasa-arvo-ohjelma 2008 –2011. Tasa-arvo ja sukupuoli oppimateriaaleissa)

Goals of gender equality presented in the legislation and curricula do not always correspond with the reality of the school environment. Learning material may still reinforce traditional notions of the roles of men and women in society and that boys are the reason for disturbance in the classroom, excel at mathematics and sciences, but are less successful in languages (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 35). The so-called *hidden curriculum* refers to the implicit knowledge learned at school regardless of the goals set by official curricula or legislation (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 26-27). Due to the hidden curriculum, pupils are taught to act in a certain way at school and because of this the pupils' experiences may differ from one another. The stereotypical notions of the gender-specific roles are further reinforced and this creates a continuum in the society. The hidden curriculum does not only implicitly regulate teaching and school environments but it is profoundly rooted in teacher training as well. Especially in Finland, gender-equality is seen as a self-evident and thus it is believed that the problems are elsewhere, which leads to the assumption that no attention needs to be paid to gender issues as a separate matter and gender-neutrality is seen synonymous to gender-equality, when a more correct approach would be *gender-conscious* or *gender-sensitive* (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 35). The peril of the gender-neutral approach is that it causes "gender-blindness", the unawareness of gender, which then can result in subconscious reinforcement of the stereotypes or inability to recognize gender-related issues when encountering them (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 32).

The work for gender equality is work against the traditional ways of gender categorization. As human beings, we have a tendency to categorize our knowledge about the world in order to build our individual perceptions of both the concrete objects and the abstract concepts that surround us. These processes of categorization and pattern formation then help us to memorize and make use of the information that we have acquired. The concept of gender is a basic example of categorization, as people have traditionally been put into two groups according to their biological features.

MacInnes (1998, 8) states that these categories and organizing principles are a global phenomenon and they participate in maintaining notions on sex and gender in different societies. In the ancient times, men and women had very distinct roles in life, when their principal aim was to stay alive: women were physically able to bear children whereas the bodies of men were suitable for hunting as well as defending their kind and attacking the enemy. Thus, the biology and physical characteristics decided the roles of men and women. This distinction seemed harmless and natural and it passed from one generation to the other. Moving on to the modern times, the traditional gender roles became more and more questioned and criticized. The gender role equalization process, to the present day, can be seen as a progressive empowerment of women, and only quite recently, has the discussion turned to the delimiting roles of men. The most current societal debate considers the need for any categorization based on biological faculties.

Nonetheless, however espoused the idea of equality is today, gender roles have not expired. In society, certain views on gender still persist and have an effect on our everyday life and behaviour. These socially shared beliefs are based on the hegemonic view of the world. Hegemony refers to the dominant view of the world which we adopt as members of the society. This view is seen as natural and self evident norm, even though it actually presents a subjective and limited concept of the world determined by the currently dominant social group. Hegemony, then, serves as the starting point for stereotyping, i.e. constructing mental categories of social groups that share certain types of characteristics and qualities. Men are traditionally considered more active, determined and logical, and in the school world they tend to excel in subjects such as mathematics and physics. Women, on the other hand, are seen as more emotionally expressive and interested in building relationships, and they are good at learning languages. Perceived gendered attributes and stereotypes such as these are differently valued – masculine traits are often revered. As a result, the traditional stereotypes and role expectations oppress, restrict and lead our everyday existence, behaviour and thoughts and decide our place and value in society.

The idea of hegemony does not mean that a human is made only of his or her experience that we would not have certain predilections shaped in evolution. Men are, on average, stronger and more aggressive than women – men release more testosterone. Women are, on average, more sensitive, compassionate, and empathic – women release more oxytocin and estrogen (Zak, 2012). This is part of our biology or sex, and yet, it does not invalidate gender equality as a moral goal or justify stringent gender roles. The idea of hegemony, in this study, accepts that biology will bias the distribution of roles; perfectly equal outcome in role division is not the ultimate aim of gender equality supporters. Instead, gender equality should characterize the process of becoming. The cultural imagination children are socialized into should not control and restrict, but enable and empower regardless of sex.

I chose to conduct a textbook analysis as the textbook still plays a major role in Finnish language teaching. In this thesis, my purpose is to examine if the textbook aligns with the current perceptions of morals and goals of gender equality, and I seek to widen the perspective by bringing together and drawing comparisons between two differing cultural backgrounds. In Finland, the pupils are accustomed to a certain “textbook style” as textbooks work as a principal guide for the teacher and the student and they are widely used all over the country. However, on the contrary, when searching for a Mexican textbook for the present thesis, I encountered the fact that textbooks are more seldom used. Furthermore, Mexican textbooks are difficult to find as the markets are dominated by international publishers. In Mexican public schools, textbooks tend to be luxury items as they are often too expensive. The teaching is often conducted with the help of copies and highly dependent of the teacher’s personal effort. In Finland, teaching is guided by national rules and conventions but in Mexico teaching is less standardized nationwide. Mexico is a country of 31 states, and therefore there is a great variety as regards English skills because of the variety of curricula, regulations and funding between the states Foreign language teaching can depend on the

place of residence (proximity to the USA), financial issues (publicly funded, partly government funded or private school) and also the availability and qualification of English teachers.

The aim of this study is to examine how gender is represented in EFL textbooks aimed at young adolescents in Finland and in Mexico. The textbooks chosen for the analysis are the Finnish *Smart Moves 3* and the Mexican *Take Care! 2*. This thesis aspires to widen the understanding of gender attitudes in EFL textbooks by introducing a comparative perspective by examining the differences and similarities in gender attitudes in the language textbooks written for pupils from two distinct cultures. I will critically examine the visibility and roles which are given to the gendered characters in the texts and the illustrations. My specific research questions are:

- How is gender represented in the Finnish *Smart Moves 3* and Mexican *Take Care! 2* textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language?
- Are both genders given an equal amount of visibility in the books?
- What kind of roles and attributions are given to the characters as members of society and family, i.e. public and private spheres? Are these representations of men and women stereotypical or deviant? How?
- Do the representations of gender in the textbooks align with the cultural backgrounds and/or goals of their societies?

The theoretical framework for the present study consists of firstly presenting the concept gender, gender stereotypes and their characteristics in both cultures and also their interchangeability. In the second part of the theoretical framework, I will move on to presenting the Declaration of Human Rights and then briefly present the legislative principles and educational policies of the two countries. As the last part of the theoretical framework, I will discuss previous research on EFL textbooks and their findings. The material and the method for the analysis will be presented in the third chapter, followed by the analysis on the two textbooks in the fourth chapter.



The findings will be discussed and compared in the fifth chapter and the final conclusions as well as suggestions for further research will be presented in the last chapter.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Gender, gender roles and stereotypes**

In this section, I will firstly define the key concept for the study, gender. I will then move on to presenting traditional views on gender in western societies, i.e. the stereotypical views of men and women, and their interchangeability. Lastly, I will discuss gender in Mexican society specifically. In this thesis, Finnish society is seen as the domestic and familiar starting point, whereas Mexico represents the foreign perspective, as the study seeks to expand the scope from the textbook studies conducted in Finland on Finnish learning material.

#### **2.1.1 The concepts of sex and gender: biological versus social aspect**

According to research on the relation between genetics and personality, the significance of genetics in the variability of personality can be around 40-60 %, and in reality the effect of genetic factors is fairly insignificant and as regards some characteristics entirely irrelevant. (see e.g. Bouchard & Loehlin 2001). Hofstede & Hofstede (2005, 117) state that from the biological perspective males are “*on average* taller and stronger, but many women are taller and stronger than quite a few men. Women have *on average* greater finger dexterity and, for example, faster metabolism”. They go on by stating that while these absolute and statistical biological differences remain the same all over the world, “their social roles in society are only partly determined by the biological constraints” and that the behaviours deemed suitable for each gender can vary considerably from one society to another. It is possible for a man to behave in a “feminine” way and for a woman to behave in a “masculine” way, and in that case, they are seen to “deviate from certain conventions in their society” (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 117). Then, it depends on the degree of tolerance and views of equality in the current cultural environment, how these deviant forms of gender representation are viewed.

Schilling (2011, 218) argues that categorizing people into two groups according to their gender is a “drastic oversimplification”, and that there is a significant difference in the ways that scholarly fields and the popular language use the concepts *sex* and *gender*. To define the concept of gender, Schilling states that it is a more “complex sociocultural and socio-psychological construct that is not reducible simply to biological or physiological sex” (2011, 218) and should not be considered erroneously synonymous to the biological concept of *sex*. Schilling also notes that “[w]hile gender is often held to be grounded in biological sex, gender also has to do with matters such as social and economical roles and relations (including, crucially, power relations), conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity, and often also with sexual orientation and sexual identity” (Schilling 2011, 218).

In this study, the social aspect gender is under closer examination. Syrjäläinen and Kujala (2010, 30-31) discuss gender in closer detail and divide it into three sub concepts: 1) social gender, 2) cultural gender and 3) psychic gender. *Social gender* means that the masculine and the feminine are not solid and rigid concepts but children tend to try out both masculine and feminine traits. The division into these two categories is a way of finding differences in the social behaviour of individuals. Children learn about gender and what is expected of either one, and paying attention to the child’s gender in social interaction supports them in developing a stable gender-identity. Secondly, *cultural gender* refers to the roles that are defined in society according to norms and expectations. Thirdly, *psychic gender* means a person’s subjective view of gender. The development of gender identity is a process that continues throughout one’s lifetime, and it is affected by cultural expectations and also biological processes. In order to build a stable gender identity, it is important that a child is able to behave both according to the typical notions of one’s gender as well as experiment with the roles of the opposite gender (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 31).

Schilling states that the focus shifts to viewing gender not as an attribute but as an interactional achievement, as a performance rather than a “given”, as an enactment that can

manifest itself differently in different cultures, communities, sub-communities, and even individuals (2011, 219). Gender identities are formed by creativeness of people but people are also “constrained by social forces, including the pervasive force of societal norms, expectations, and stereotypes for “appropriate” gender roles and gender/sexual relations. In particular, we are all constrained to some degree by the “heteronormativity” that pervades society (arguably globally) – that is, the (usually unnoticed) assumption that the normal gender order comprises heterosexual males and females who behave in normative ways (e.g. men act masculine, women act feminine)” (Schilling 2011, 219).

### 2.1.2 Stereotyping and traditional views of men and women in Western societies

A gender stereotype consists of beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of, as well as the activities appropriate to, men or women. Gender roles are defined by behaviors, but gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity. The concepts of gender role and gender stereotype tend to be related. Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2003, 92) note that according to cross-cultural studies there may be more differences among men as a social group between different countries than between men and women. Thus, he suggests that cultural and societal factors have a greater effect on the individual than biological differences. According to Saarnivaara (1989, 90), gender stereotypes limit our thinking processes, freedom of choice and work as “self-directing predictions”, which means that they re-establish traditional notions and then form expectations about our personality and abilities. Hofstede & Hofstede (2005, 118) state that the gender role pattern presented in the family by the mother and the father, as well as other family members, has a profound effect on a child, who then is “programmed with it for life” and thus it is not unexpected that the gender role patterns acquired from parents is one of the dimensions of national value systems, continuing to be re-established and reinforced in e.g. school environments.

Saarnivaara (1989, 89-90) discusses the stereotypical qualities, careers and positions in society for men and women. Masculinity is stereotypically characterized by objective, active,

dominant and goal-oriented features and qualities. Subjectivity, passiveness and dependency are then seen as feminine traits, as well as appearing in the position of a so-called “receiver”. Saarnivaara (1989, 89) states that society is essentially divided into two dimensions: the private and personal sphere, and the public and societal sphere. A woman’s place is at home and taking care of the family whereas a man is a member of the societal field. This division where women belong to the first sphere and men to the second one has led to a clear division in values and qualities for the two genders. Men’s’ sphere involves competition, success and determination whereas women’s sphere values empathy, nurturing and caring for others. Therefore, women take care of the reproduction of the species that the men command and set the rules for. As the “male sphere” is seen as more important and crucial for the development of the society, masculine characteristics tend to possess more value, appreciation and importance. In the working field, nurturing and teaching jobs are considered a natural continuum for women as carers of home and family.

Syrjäläinen & Kujala (2010, 32) state that stereotypes are simplified perceptions of how men and women “are generally viewed, have been viewed and are desired to be viewed”. These perceptions are also firmly tied to the cultural environment. Syrjäläinen & Kujala (2010, 33) state that men are typically claimed to be more logical, better at leading positions, more rational, more restless and harsher than women who are claimed to be more emotional, more composed, more nurturing, gentler and kinder. Gender stereotypes are thus typically contrastive qualities, which further maintain and reinforce inequality when related to power issues. Although stereotypes are often seen as negative, they can also be viewed as a positive phenomenon as they can facilitate gender identity construction of an individual. Women are often the passive actors in a situation, only reactive to their environment (Hogben & Waterman 1997, 95). Peterson & Kroner (1992) also found that they are more often recipients of the actions of others and the observers. Modesty is a virtue more connected to women, and women are considered to aspire to equality rather than superiority. Women experience great pressure when it comes to their appearance and they are

considered to communicate their emotions better and they can interpret facial expressions and visual cues more accurately than men (Hall & Matsumoto 2004, 201-206). In the field of studying and career, female students have traditionally enrolled in fewer math and science courses and expressed less interest in pursuing math- and science related careers than male students (Kahle & Lakes 1983).

Femininity is defined in Hudson's (1984, 38) study as feminine appearance (e.g. soft, womanly, having curves, good looking, dressing nicely, a good figure, pretty etc.), personality (gentle, compassionate, nurturing, not strident, kindness, quietness, not aggressive). Saarnivaara (1989, 90) also suggests that even though men hold the dominant position in society, women can use their feminine qualities, mainly sexuality or their feminine "weakness", as a means to indirectly obtain control in society.

Masculinity on the other hand is found to mean brutality and physical strength, being hard-boiled and strident (Hudson 1984, 32-35). Violence is considered a strongly masculine tendency, as a teacher interviewed by Hudson argues that "boys fight more than girls do. Girls use violence a lot less than boys do. Girls do other things to be nasty to each other" (Hudson 1984, 43). It is therefore implied that the importance of appearance is stereotypically a representation of femininity. Furthermore, the teacher mentions a key factor in what is perceived as the difference in violent behaviour between females and males: they use different ways to express their anger. Thus, both genders can be equally aggressive and possess a tendency to violence, but aggression is stereotypically dealt with and channeled in differing ways.

### 2.1.3 Gender roles in Mexican society

As Speed (2006, 206) states, even though the Mexican Constitution establishes equality, there are certain groups that do not receive equal treatment before the law or in their everyday lives: women and indigenous people. In Mexico, the so-called *usos y costumbres* (Engl. *customs and traditions*) are still very much present. These refers to traditional practices and customs, and in the negative sense, it means that certain issues can be justified because they are part of the tradition. Thus, for example, “arranged marriage, exclusion of women from political participation, and male-line inheritance” are practices that violate women’s rights and also basic human rights. Therefore there is often a contradiction between the woman’s rights as an individual and the cultural rights, i.e. collective rights of certain indigenous groups, which complicates the struggle for equality in the Mexico as a multicultural nation (Speed 2006, 206).

Mexicans are one of the most populous minorities in North America, and the juxtaposition between the majority and the minority facilitates the emergence of stereotypes, which are usually demeaning. Especially the stereotype of a Mexican man is very negative, which can be detected from media and people’s attitudes. Haywood & Mac an Ghaill (2003, 90) state that in Northern America, the Mexican male is represented as “adulterous, promiscuous, irresponsible to children and physically abusive in marriage”. In 1996, Gutmann investigated in his study on working class men in the suburbs of Mexico City the ways in which they perform their masculinity (quoted in Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003, 90). In Mexico, the words for describing this were *macho*, *machismo* and *mandilon*. Machismo is probably the most known concept of these, and translated literally it refers to men being machos and manly, being the head of the family and having power and being proud of it. It also includes being responsible for other members of the family. But it also has a negative connotation and referring to men who beat their wives. Gutmann states that in his fieldwork it proved to refer to both an un-manly wife beater and authentic manliness. He also found out that in the past it used to mean principled and courageous male, whereas nowadays the

cowardly and unworthy definition has been added, even to the extent that nowadays machismo could refer to the femininity of the man. Mandilon refers to a man who is dominated by a woman but that these men rarely identify themselves with the word. Gutmann also found that while the perception of a Mexican man is irresponsible and carefree as regards family in reality there were no proof to support the assumption. He explains that while women are the principal carers of the household, men are also part of the life and take part in their children's lives. What he found was that the role that men have as a father varied between regions, class and ethnicity (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003, 90-92).

Finkler (1994, 31) found that especially in the urban areas in Mexico, gender culture seems to share more similarities with a urban area of a developed country (in this case New York, USA, specifically) than with a Mexican rural area: Women in the same wealth class share the same thoughts of life in both countries, as regards male-female relations and the position of women in society. However, it is stated that women are still economically dependent on men, and aim for a matrimonial relationship in which the man is the provider and the woman's status is defined by her husband's status (Finkler 1994, 31). In urban areas the influence of developed countries and modernized societies, the position of women could thus be considered closer to achieving the goal of equality than in rural areas and *pueblos* (Engl. *villages*), where in indigenous societies, the patriarchal hierarchy still dominates the rights of women. In addition to the patriarchal view of the catholic church which is the most widely recognized religious view in Mexico, in rural areas such as in Chiapas, southern Mexico, women have to fight for rights to inherit land, they can never be heads of the family as there is always a man above them (Moncayo 2006, 81). In the rural areas, it was not uncommon for a woman to be beaten by their husbands as the patriarchal view placed them as subordinate to men and it was considered unacceptable for married women to leave the house as it would put them in danger or in the availability of other men. These traditional views have



naturally changed over time, but they still remain to varied degrees in villages and rural settings that maintain a tighter grasp on the traditions than urban areas (Kanter 2008, 28-36).

#### 2.1.4 Comparing ideas of gender in Finland and in Mexico

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) suggest, the social conventions of suitable behaviour for males on females, masculinity and femininity, can differ to a great degree between cultures. In his empirical study on IBM employees in different countries, Geert Hofstede found four basic problem areas that represent the dimensions of cultures, one of which is the dimension of *femininity versus masculinity* (2005, 22-23). A dimension in this context refers to “an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (2005, 23) and the findings of the study demonstrate the scale of differences in views on gender between Finland and Mexico.

To society is defined a society to be *masculine* “when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called *feminine* when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 120). Countries can be classified by using a so-called masculinity index (MAS) and with the help of the MAS score provided by the study, comparisons between the two countries can be drawn: In the case of Finland, the MAS score is 26 and its ranking among the 74 countries studied is 68<sup>th</sup>. For Mexico, the MAS score is 69 and it is on the 8<sup>th</sup> place on the list (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 121). The difference between the placements two countries on the list is significant, as they are positioned on opposing ends of the scale. The dissimilarity of the two cultures is also connected to *power distance*, i.e. “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 46), and individualism: Finland is classified as a feminine, individualist society with small power distance, whereas Mexico

is characterized as a masculine, collective society with large power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 124, 129). It can be concluded that the two societies possess values and ideas that are in stark contrast to one another, both in terms of masculinity and femininity and in society in general.

#### 2.1.5 Gender identity and interchangeability of roles

Interchangeability is a central issue for the present thesis, as in order to achieve gender equality, gender roles should be fully interchangeable, i.e. men and women would be able to perform any kind of identity, role or position in society and receive equal response for the same “performance”.

Hudson (1984, 32) discusses the disempowerment and negativity among young women as regards adolescence. She denotes that adolescence, and the perceptions of rebellion and lack of maturity connected to it, is essentially a masculine concept. She found that girls were given strict expectations as regards their appearance and behaviour, which differ from boy adolescents. When a girl performs similar adolescent behaviour to a boy, she is an example of “maladjustment to femininity” by the adult observers (Hudson 1984, 32). It is thus implied that women who do not embrace femininity and act accordingly, fail as members of the gender group. What is deemed normal for boys, is abnormal and negative for girls. Thus, the scope of experiencing adolescence is much narrower for girls, as they have only one acceptable path, whereas rebellion and bad behavior is only acceptable for boys.

Saarnivaara (1989, 91) also states that it is much easier for women to deviate from the stereotypical model in their work or leisure activities. This derives from the differences in appreciation of the masculine and feminine fields. The women aspiring to success on a male-dominated field presents someone who looks to transfer from a lower position to a higher one. In contrast, as female qualities are less valued, men who aspire to work in a female-dominated field, e.g. as a nurse, are considered downgrading from their position in society. For males, only a leader position on a female-dominated field would be accepted as normal. The majority of societies

elevate men – and the activities/attributes associated with men in that society – over women and their related activities and apparent attributes (Saarnivaara 1989, 90).

Sunderland (1995) studied the differences between girls and boys and their perceptions of these differences. In her interviews, she found that besides the abovementioned gender identity differences between the two groups, the girls also point out the varied degrees of identities among themselves: they see one of them more “boyish” than the other. Sunderland found that for girls it is considered acceptable to identify as a boy, but not the other way around. The masculine identity is considered the “norm” and the feminine identity is the “other”. This creates a problematic scenario, as boys seems to have very little flexibility as regards their masculinity, but girls are able to “‘move’ from ‘femininity’ to ‘masculinity’ with ease and control” (Sunderland, 1995, 173). Thus, the feminine identity is still regarded as an insult whereas the masculine identity is the norm. This can be seen as an advantage for the girls to be able to shift from one to the other without any problems, i.e. to have more freedom and also acquire a power position over the male, but is essentially derived from the lack of appreciation of femininity. As Phillips notes, while in today’s society the roles and possibilities for women have changed and developed greatly over the years, “[w]e have not yet come up with a similarly positive way of suggesting to boys that their definitions of gender could also be expanded.” (Phillips 1993, 216)

As discussed by Haywood & Mac an Ghaill (2003, 7), men experience significant difficulty in meeting the requirements of their social role and are more likely to fail to meet the ideals of strength, power and sexual competence and roles such as ‘absent father’, ‘violent football fan’ or ‘underachieving male student’ are given as examples of negative masculinity. Haywood & Mac an Ghaill (2003, 4) also states social places of state, family life, working field and education as central battle fields of genders.

Social changes brought forward by feminism are discussed by Mary Talbot, as she points out that in current media publications, white heterosexual masculinity is struggling while feminism

unveils the hidden agenda behind it. Hegemonic views are not seen as natural, “just human nature”, anymore, and these conventions continue to be shaken in the workplace and in the family (1997, 184).

## **2.2 Gender equality, human rights and legislation: global and country specific goals**

In this section, I will present the basic human rights according to the United Nations and then move on to the legislation and educational policies of the two countries.

### **2.2.1 Global goals of gender equality according to the United Nations**

The United Nations is responsible for maintaining peace between the nations of the world. In the Charter of the United Nations (CUN), the treaty compiled in 1945 and signed by its 51 member countries, the purpose of the UN is specified as “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (CUN 1945, Article 1) This aim is culminated in the universal human rights. The principal motivation for the present study is also stated clearly in the first two articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

#### **Article 1.**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### **Article 2.**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

(The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948.)

After defining these fundamental rights, the articles related to gender issues are further specified with regard to the right to family and marriage (Article 16), work (Article 23) and education (Article 26). It is specifically stated in article 26 that “[e]ducation shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and

fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948.)

Therefore according to the declaration, all human beings shall have freedom and enjoy equality regardless of their background, opinions or other qualities. The preamble of the declaration also states that “every individual and every organ of society, keeping this declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance” (UDHR, 1948). Therefore, the crucial role of the educational field in achieving global goals of equality is clearly emphasized. Equality in education then partakes in the endeavours to achieve equality on the working field, i.e. receiving equal pay and freedom of career choice, freedom of choice with regard to marriage and family formation, as well as supports development of human beings towards tolerance, respect and international peace. At the same time, education is described to be both a right and a responsibility of each individual.

#### 2.2.2 Gender, legislation and educational policies in the Finnish society

In Finland, the Constitution and the Act on Equality between Women and Men are the principal legislation documents which discuss gender issues and equality. The Act of Equality (Tasa-arvolaki 609/1986) states as its purpose to prevent discrimination according to gender and promote the equality between men and women and this purpose especially involves improving the status of women in the working field. (Tasa-arvolaki, Article 1).

In the educational field, it shall be guaranteed by the organization providing the education and the authorities that girls and boys, as well as men and women, shall have equal opportunities to education and occupational development and teaching, research and also the learning material should support this goal. (Tasa-arvolaki. Article 5) The education providers are to design a yearly

equality plan in order to improve and develop gender-equality (Tasa-arvolaki. Article 5a). The Act of Equality also specifies that direct or indirect discrimination according to gender is prohibited, which means that men and women shall not be given differing status or position according to their gender, gender identity or gender identity performance (Tasa-arvolaki. Article 7).

The Finnish comprehensive schools operate according to the basic education core curriculum. The currently used core curriculum was established in 2004 and in December 2014, the most recently developed curriculum was accepted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This curriculum will be applied at comprehensive schools in 2016. The core curriculum determines matters that are central to education and teaching, such as the goals, principles and fundamental values and the structure of teaching and the aims and key contents of subjects, etc. The core curriculum is laid out by the National Board of Education, which is responsible for developing the education system in Finland. The national core curriculum forms the basis for local curricula, determined by the institutions and local authority. To achieve the goal of equality, the educational facilities should compile a yearly plan among the staff and the student representatives. The plan should contain the current situation and problems, as well as the measures to be taken to resolve the problems. Special attention should be laid on achieving equality as regards teaching, evaluation and intake of students, as well as measures to be taken in order to eliminate sexual harassment and discrimination. (Ministry of Education and Culture).

According to Lahelma (1989, 15) the objectives for gender-equal education in Finland can be presented in three viewpoints. Firstly, the objective for equal education means that the school system needs to support the society to develop towards equal possibilities, rights and responsibilities for men and women. Secondly, special attention should be paid to the responsibility of the school to support girls and boys to grow free from rigid gender roles into using their full potential as a human being, both their masculine and feminine qualities. Thirdly, the qualities, abilities and experiences of women should be given equal significance and value as their masculine

counterparts. The objective is therefore not making women similar to men, but to raise femininity to the same level with masculine qualities. She also admits that this is no easy task, as society is firmly based on masculinity; therefore in-depth changes and observation is required (Lahelma 1989, 15).

### 2.2.3 Gender, legislation and educational policies in the Mexican society

The Mexican Constitution and specifically the General Law on Equality Between Women and Men (Ley General para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres = LGIMH) defines as its objective to guarantee equal opportunities and treatment of men and women, providing the guidelines and institutional mechanisms to lead the country towards accomplishing substantial equality both in public and private environments. The empowerment of women shall be promoted and gender discrimination shall be fought against (Articles 1 & 41). This goal shall be achieved by e.g. introducing a gender viewpoint on public political issues, language use in all social contexts and equal, non-stereotypical image of men and women shall be mediated in society, and sexist language shall be avoided (Article 42).

In Mexico, the Secretariat of Public Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública* = the SEP) is responsible for the curricula for all public comprehensive schools. However, as regards 13 to 15 year-old students, government funded schools conduct 7 percent of teaching, private schools amount to eight (8) percent and the remaining 85 percent of the schools in Mexico are funded and regulated by the local educational authorities. Furthermore, on upper secondary and tertiary levels, teaching is also often conducted by autonomous institutions, which are not regulated by the SEP or the local authorities. For upper secondary school level, 44 percent of the students attend a school administered by the local authorities, 25 percent are enrolled in a school administered by the SEP directly, 13 percent attend an autonomous school that is university-affiliated and the remaining 18 per cent attend a private school. Therefore, the national curriculum is not applied to all comprehensive schools (WENR. 2013).

The SEP specified as its goals the construction of educational and working environments that are free of stereotypes, discrimination and violence related to gender. In addition to these, the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* = PND) and the National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination of Women (Programa Nacional para la Igualdad de Oportunidades y no Discriminación contra las Mujeres) 2013-2018 establish the obligation of implementing these policies and institutionalizing the governments plans of equality in order to achieve substantial equality between men and women. These policies should be reflected in education, culture and in the field of sports as well. The PND specifically states that the gap between men and women shall also be reduced at home by encouraging men to take part in domestic tasks and the economical wellbeing of women shall be emphasized.

The SEP states that roles and stereotypes are the principal cause of discrimination and violence against women, and it aspires to promote normative changes such as implementing activities which strengthen the capacity of the personnel and also different areas of the SEP in order to incorporate a gender perspective in the institution. The Subsecretariat of Planning and Evaluation of Educational Policies (*Subsecretaría de Planeación y Evaluación de Políticas Educativas* = SPEPE) defines the principles of educational policies in the country. With regard to gender issues, the General Assistant Directory of Gender Equality (Dirección General Adjunta de Igualdad de Género = DGAIG) is responsible for implementing the policies assigned by the SPEPE, and applying the principles of and equality stereotype elimination into curricula and teaching material.

### **2.3 Gender equality in the educational field and learning material**

In this section, I will briefly discuss gender equality and in the educational field in general. Then, I will present previous studies on textbooks and their findings.



### 2.3.1 Gender equality in the educational field

As stated in the introduction, gender equality is especially important in the field of education because it reflects and affects the current situation as regards the social and occupational fields. As Lahelma states

It [the school system] is an important transmitter of culture. It is not irrelevant, what kind of image of masculinity and femininity is imparted to the students. In fact, schools are obliged to promote gender-equality and have great possibilities to do so. The students spend a significant amount of time at school during a period during which has a great effect on the development of their world view. (Lahelma 1989, 14)

Lahelma (1989, 13) also specifies that presenting the two genders differently leads to inequality on the working field, as masculine qualities tend to be more valued than feminine qualities. This has a significant effect on salaries and leads to male- or female-dominated working fields. She emphasizes the importance of educational environments as a highly influential and one of the crucial stages during one's intellectual growth. Therefore as an opportunity which should be used for our advantage, i.e. presenting values that promote equality and a wide range of opportunities for both men and women. Lahelma (1989, 13) also states that while the starting point has traditionally been improving the status of women in society, this movement has later been reinforced by paying attention to the biased view of masculinity.

In the field of education, gender (and biological sex) has traditionally had an explicit and implicit role. As Palmu, (2001, 181) states, girls and boys are often expected and assumed to possess stereotypical desires, needs and knowledge, and even though attempts are being made to “vanish” and hide gender ideas, schools still often operate in a controlled and regulated way in which gender has a systematic role. It is considered normal procedure, mostly due to familiarity and a simple habit to address students by their gender without paying attention. Delamont underlines the opportunities of the school environment as regards gender issues:

Schools develop and reinforce sex segregations, stereotypes and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world, when they could be trying to alleviate them. (Delamont 1990, 2)

Palmu (2001, 182-183) also points out that in school environments, gender is often seen as a clear binary concept, and the all pupils are expected to possess the same qualities according to their gender group. According to Tainio & Teräs (2011) it is especially important to provide pupils in the comprehensive school with a open-minded view of the working life, as the attitudes they adopt reflect on their future careers. Once these pre-assumptions are acquired, it is much more difficult to alleviate later in life, which leads to segregation between the two genders.

According to Delamont (1990, 2), it can be concluded that the seemingly innocent reference to the students as members of a specific gender can therefore be seen as a reinforcement of the differences between genders, which should not be downplayed and disregarded. By using these gender-specific address terms, as harmless as they might seem, we are constantly re-establishing the gap between the two genders. The behaviour learnt at school is then transferred to everyday life outside of the learning environment. In order to develop the society closer to equality, it is not sufficient to only aspire to passively avoid segregations, but to actively participate in alleviating the gender gap.

In her study on teachers' attitudes and responses to boys and girls behavior in the classroom environment in Greece, Altani (1996) found that the teachers highly agree with the statement "boys are more disruptive in the classroom than girls". She found that the teachers of the school accept different behaviour from girls and boys as a "fact", which results in "unfair distribution of teacher attention among male and female pupils". This imbalance further contributes to the inequality between the genders and therefore challenges Delamont's view mentioned above. The teachers are allowing the male pupils to dominate the learning environment and by doing this, giving them importance over the female pupils.

### 2.3.2 The importance of studying textbooks

In her article, Julia Penelope discusses the ability of a human being to interpret discourse. However, she states that “not all discourse is equally amenable to successful interpretation, and syntactic rules can be manipulated to force the reader/hearer to provide spurious information, in the absence of help from the writer, or to make the reader think that s/he has read in the text what s/he has, in fact, supplied out of her/his own linguistic experience (1988, 257). The interpretation process is therefore formed in the receiver’s mind: it is a combination of the received information and the existing knowledge and personal views of the receiver. The content can also manipulate the reader/hearer without their realization. Therefore it is important to closely examine these explicit and implicit messages conveyed by the textbooks, as they can be considered the only obligatory texts that everyone is required to read during their lifetime.

Textbooks, in addition to teaching and other learning material, are central sources of information on cultural ideas and perceptions, and the teachers interviewed by Palmu cite the contents of the learning material, and the decisions of inclusion and omission of contents, as a transmitter of gender ideas (Palmu 2001, 183).

Richards (*The role of textbooks in a language program*) comments on the importance (or unimportance) of textbooks and mentions one factor that is closely linked to gender issues. He states: “They [textbooks] may distort content. Textbooks often present an idealized view of the world or fail to represent real issues. In order to make textbooks acceptable in many different contexts controversial topics are avoided and instead an idealized white middle-class view of the world is portrayed as the norm.”

Textbook analysis is an important practice as teaching materials in developed countries are often highly regulated and compiled according to the hegemonic world view, and in order to develop teaching materials along with the society, textbook analysis is needed. The view of the world might not be explicitly stated in the book, but it is clearly there. Hutchinson & Torres (1994,

315) state: “The danger with ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of participating in the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach it, it is easy to just sit back and operate the system, secure in the belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us. Unfortunately this is rarely the case.”

### 2.3.3 Past and present of textbook studies

Neuerdorf (2002) explains that textbooks are a typical material for studying roles and behaviour of men and women, and that the studies have generally shown a tendency of males to be heavily overrepresented and also given more important roles. The studies also often find stark sex stereotyping “with significant and often predictable differences between male and female characterizations” (Neuerdorf 2002, 202).

A popular area of research as regards foreign language education and gender has been the analysis of classroom materials (see e.g. von Hoene 2006) and one of the main focuses of these analyses has been the visibility of the two genders in the textbooks. It has however to be taken into account that the textbook is not studied in a vacuum: there are other factors, such as the teacher, the student and their opinions present in the background. Gray (2000, 274-283) has studied the teachers influence in the process, as he states that cultural contents that they deem questionable or difficult, can be modified by the teacher in various ways, and are also easily left outside of the topics discussed in the classroom. Von Hoene thereby suggests that the focus should be shifted from the textbooks themselves into teaching the students to be critical towards the material. Sunderland et al. (2002) argue that the receiver, i.e. the student is the one who really matters. Therefore, there are two aspects to the issue, and their importance is can be debated, but the purpose of this essay is to try to examine one of these aspects: the teaching material and its contents.

Talansky (1986) found that in textbooks women are often not present at all, or in the event of women being included in the book, they are usually in minor roles or humorously presented.. Sleeter & Grant (1997) found that women are often portrayed in clearly gender-stereotypical roles. As examples of these stereotypes, she describes women as worriers and nurturers, who are concentrated on their appearance, scared and helpless. The stereotypes for men range from being brave, possessing a need to be powerful and to prove themselves. They also found that females are more prone to appear in roles that are outside their stereotypical scope, because “while most books show some females doing things such as participating in athletics, carrying a briefcase, or having an adventure, one must look hard to find males doing things such as taking care of children, working in the kitchen, or holding a traditionally female occupation” (Sleeter & Grant 1997, 90). Curiously, she found that even animals tend to follow the stereotypical gender roles when their gender is stated. Men also dominate as focal characters, even though more female characters are presented.

When examining textbooks to find gender-related data for the present study, Jennifer Pugsley (1992) suggests looking at the number of references to or illustrations of men and women and also number of references to by occupation, stereotypical occupations according to gender. Sexism in textbooks also appears through stereotypical features given for the characters (e.g. women as weak and emotional and men as strong and impassive) and the implication often being that emotions are strictly feminine qualities and thus are invariably negative characteristics. (Pugsley 1992, 6).

Hogben and Waterman (1997) found in their study that men were more often portrayed as dominant or having higher status than women in textbook images. Peterson and Kroner (1992) also found that men were significantly more likely to be portrayed in active roles by directly engaging in and initiating activity, e.g. leading a group, and also managing their environment.

Lähdesmäki (2006) states that even though the textbook provides the learner with a base for the subject that he or she studies, the teacher also makes his or her own choices how to use the

material and also what should be added to it. The textbook is the most important tool for a foreign language teacher and also for the student but at the same time it can be a burden and a limitation as well. According to Lähdesmäki (2006), this division to having clear advantages and disadvantages is probably the reason for the interest to study textbooks: the textbooks can have a great effect not only on the knowledge but also the attitudes and opinions of the learners. As stated in the introduction, when learning a language, other information transmitted besides the grammar and vocabulary of the language are traditionally geography and culture, but also societal and social values. Multicultural education and tolerance are to a great degree essential to language teaching in the era of globalization (Lähdesmäki 2006, 271-272). The implicit or explicit attitudes are always transmitted intentionally or unintentionally, which make them an interesting and important field of study as they reflect the attitudes of the dominant culture. The cultural content of the language books however is often portrayed as stereotypically patriarchal and heterosexual, and the multicultural and diverse reality is omitted (Lähdesmäki 2006, 274).

As regards studies on textbooks, Lähdesmäki (2006) states that there is a wide range of literature available on English textbooks, but the studies conducted and the information gathered can be considered fragmented. In Finland, studies on textbooks are frequently conducted but these studies are often on the master's thesis level. More research of wider scope is therefore needed, and Anne Pitkänen-Huhta's dissertation (2003) on linguistic interactivity in the classroom and the effect of textbooks is one of the most recent studies on textbooks (Lähdesmäki 2006, 273-274).

### 3. Research design

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss how and why the materials were chosen and introduce the two textbooks. As the second section of this chapter, I will present the methods for the present study and discuss how the study was conducted.

#### 3.1 Material

The material of the study consists of two EFL textbooks: the Finnish *Smart Moves 3* and the Mexican *Take Care! 2*. In this section, I will first explain the process of the acquisition of the material suitable for the purposes of my study and secondly introduce the contents and structure of both textbooks as well as their differences.

The Mexican textbook *Take Care! 2* was chosen first as the foreign counterpart for the present analysis. During my student exchange in Mexico, my goal was to find a specifically Mexican EFL book which was designed especially for pupils with Mexican background cultural knowledge. The reason for choosing this particular book was simply a case of availability: the *Take Care!* series was the only Mexican teaching material I was able to encounter at local book stores. Very little information could be found on the publisher or the author Vika Sadzhaya, but the textbook was printed and bound in Mexico, and it is principally sold on Mexican bookstores online, along with other textbooks series by the author, and it includes clear references to Mexico and Mexican culture. Most foreign language textbooks in Mexico are globally marketed publications from international publishing houses, e.g. Cambridge University Press or Macmillan Publishers, which are designed for country-independent use. Thus, books developed and designed solely for Mexican students are few in numbers and difficult to find due to the easy accessibility to international teaching material and the subsequent lack of demand for specifically Mexican textbooks. Furthermore, because of the differing backgrounds as regards the funding of education and the preference for international textbooks, the market for developing teaching material

specifically for Mexican students is notably smaller than the widespread market for bilingual textbooks favored in Finland.

As noted above, the school systems of the two countries differ from one another and therefore it is not a straightforward task to simply compare two textbooks of the same grade. International, monolingual EFL textbooks, in this case *Take Care! 2* as well, are often defined according to their skill level instead of a certain year of school. In this way, the books can more easily be taught regardless of the place or the age of the pupils (or mother tongue). Because of this, I proceeded to find the domestic counterpart to match the same proficiency level of the Mexican book. *Take Care! 2* specifies its level of English language proficiency by using the Common European Framework (CEF). According to the editor, the book is aimed at students on level A1 aspiring to advance to level B1. Therefore, the Finnish equivalent should match this level. According to the Finnish National Curricula, the proficiency of A1 English (A1: taken as the first foreign language) at the end of a pupil's comprehensive school (9<sup>th</sup> year, end of secondary school) is as follows: the student with a good knowledge of English possesses the following skills on CEF:

Listening Comprehension	Spoken skills	Reading Comprehension	Writing skills
B1.1	A2.2	B1.1	A2.2

*Smart Moves 3*, which is studied during the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the Finnish secondary school, should provide the student with the knowledge of English on the levels between A2 and B1. Therefore, *Smart Moves 3* (level A2 to B1) would thus fall roughly on the same level on the CEF as *Take Care! 2* (level A1 to B1). The target age group of *Smart Moves 3* is 15 to 16-year-olds, and the most probable target group for *Take Care! 2* is between 15 and 17 years of age, depending on the curricula of the school.

Other reasons for choosing *Smart Moves 3* is that it can be considered an exemplary Finnish textbook, as it is used at schools that participate in teacher training. These schools can be regarded as representing the latest views and developments in education, as they are the hub of future



teachers, experimental teaching methods and research. It can be assumed that the *Smart Moves* series has been chosen for its functionality in reaching the aims outlined in the Finnish National Core Curriculum.

### 3.1.1 *Smart Moves 3*

As the Finnish counterpart for the present analysis, *Smart Moves 3* (hereafter *SM*) by the Finnish publishing house Otava is analyzed. *SM* is used in secondary schools and there is one book for each year. Thus, the third book of the series is used on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the final year of the Finnish comprehensive school and the pupils with good knowledge should reach level B1.1 at the end of the year.

*SM* is divided into three courses and as the academic year is divided into five teaching periods in Finland, English is taught in three of these five periods. Each course includes 7 to 9 main chapters which on average consist of 2 to 3 pages of text. On each page, the text is divided into several paragraphs and the text is normally accompanied by at least one illustration per page. In addition to the chapters, there are also *Smart Talk* sections for speaking practice, *Bits 'n' Pieces* that include facts and cultural information about English speaking countries, *Reader* sections for more reading practice and a few songs by popular artists.

### 3.1.2 *Take Care! 2*

*Take Care! 2* (hereafter *TC*) by Euro Publishing is a textbook that is mainly used in Mexican secondary (started when the pupils are 12 to 13 years old) or upper secondary schools (started at 15 to 16 years old). It is stated on the cover, that the target group for the group are teenagers and young adults and it can also be used for self study.

The entire *Take Care!* series is a six-level, modular system course of American English based on the Common European Framework. *TC* is divided into 4 modules (1. Future Plans 2. Past

Actions 3. What were you doing? 4. Interrupted or Simultaneous) and each module is divided into seven sections: four *lessons*, which could be defined as equivalent to main chapters in *SM*, and also sections named *cultural page*, *workbook* and a *grammar reference*. There is also a time planner provided to the pupil as the textbook can be used for self-study as well.

For the purposes of the present study, only the *lesson* sections will be analysed. Each *lesson* consists of two pages and includes short texts (usually in the form of a dialogue), oral or written exercises (e.g. multiple choice, true/false or open questions), as well as abundant illustrations. As grammar sections are not included in the present analysis, also the mini-grammar boxes presented in the lessons are left out of the analysis.

### 3.1.3 Differences in the textbooks

There is one fundamental difference in the textbooks: *Smart Moves* is a bilingual textbook series (Finnish-English) and *Take Care* as international teaching material is conducted solely in English. This difference, however, does not affect the current analysis as only the main chapters and the *Smart Talk* sections of the *SM* textbook are included in the analysis where the Finnish language is not applied.

The two textbooks are dissimilar with regard to their way of presenting the content. *SM* consists of clearly marked principal chapters, as well as speaking and reading exercises. Written exercises are compiled into a separate workbook, which is not analysed in the present study. *TC* is designed to be an interactive learning material: textbook and workbook are combined into one. In *TC* the *lessons* include texts of varied lengths as well as written, spoken and listening exercises. *SM* also relies more on the presence of a teacher than *TC*, which includes directions for independent use and therefore could be studied outside of classroom. The present thesis concentrates on the texts and illustrations themselves without discussing the form or the medium through which they could be presented or discussed in the classroom.

The *Smart Talk* sections, which are conversations between two gendered characters, are included because of their relevance as regards the topic of the present study. Furthermore, in *TC* the conversational exercises are parts of the analysed *lessons* equivalent to main chapters in *SM*, thus, the two aspects included in the analysis are equivalent to each other as the cultural pages and the workbook pages were left out.

### 3.2 Methodology

The study falls in the field of textbook analysis because the data for the analysis is collected from textbooks. The principal methods applied in this study are quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a technique for systematically observing frequencies of specific content characteristics. The data obtained in this manner is descriptive (George 2009, 144).

Neuerdorf summarizes content analysis to be “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (2002, 1). She describes it as a careful analysis of character portrayals, e.g. in literature and specifically mentions content analysis to have been used for the description of how the two genders are portrayed on television programmes, among various other types of research. Content analysis can therefore be described as a flexible method that can be used for various purposes. Content analysis is also essentially dependent on the analyst, as he or she determines the contents and the variables to be analysed in his or her research. Hence, research is, in principle, always biased by the chosen methods as well as researcher's subjectivity (Neuerdorf 2002, 95).

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002) state that content analysis aims to study the material in order to find possible similarities and differences as well as to form a general idea of the concept studied. Content analysis can therefore be both qualitative and quantitative, and both approaches can be applied for analyzing the same material. Eskola (2001) states that research can be theory-based, theory-guided or material-based. My study can be classified as principally material-based and also

to some extent theory-guided. The present analysis is conducted according to the findings in the material, and the categories and classifications are also based on the findings. The theoretical framework which compiled supports the analysis with regard to defining key concepts such as gender stereotypes and global and national goals as well as presents previous research on the current topic of gender. The theoretical framework and the findings of my analysis are then brought together and compared in the discussion chapter.

In the Finnish Government Action Plan for Gender Equality (2008-2011), gender equality in teaching materials was specifically addressed. For the present analysis as well, the questions presented in the document support the present study (my italics):

- Are men and women, girls and boys, feminine and masculine characters presented in equal *numbers* in the *texts* and *illustrations*?
- Are men and women featured equally as *main characters*?
- How are *occupations* and *leadership* described? Are men described in the field of nursing or women in the field of technology?
- How is *family* described? Are *household tasks* divided stereotypically to men's and women's tasks?
- What kinds of personality traits and outer features are connected to different genders? Does the book maintain the traditional views on how men and women are as human beings?
- Is the world presented in the book repeatedly divided into two spheres according to gender, even though people can be grouped in other ways as well? For example, are the notion of male superiority in *sports* and the differences in *hobbies* and *interests* between men and women enforced in the book?
- How are *active* and *passive* roles portrayed? Who talks and who listens?
- Are literature excerpts cited from male and female authors equally?
- Are men and women cited equally as experts?

The questions state specifically the issues that should be to examine in a textbook with regard gender equality. The theoretical framework for the present study was compiled according to the findings in the two textbooks, and judging by the questions above, the issues and categories found to be involved with gender in the textbooks align with the guidelines defines by the Finnish Government Action Plan for Gender Equality. Section 4.1 will concentrate on analyzing the data quantitatively and in sections 4.2 – 4.6, figures and calculations will be presented but the focus will be on analyzing the roles qualitatively according to the following themes: occupation and wealth

(4.2), studying and education (4.3), family, relationships and home life (4.4), hobbies and free time (4.5) and popular culture (4.5).

I will analyse the main chapters and illustrations in both books. In order to present the findings in a consistent and clear manner throughout the analysis, *SM* will be presented first, followed by the analysis of *TC* in each section. The occurrences of male characters will be analysed first and female characters second. In the occurrence of a character whose gender could not be identified for some reason, for example in the case of small or blurry images or the face of the character is not shown, the character was left out of the analysis. Diagrams will be used in order to form a general idea of more complex categories. In the case of multiple representations of a role, the number of occurrences is presented in brackets.

Before moving on to the analysis however, it should be stated that there are no other representations of gender presented in either one of the books outside of the binary view of men and women. The textbooks are yet to acknowledge the existence of other types of gender representation, but this is hardly a surprise as society may take years in the process from acknowledgement and acceptance to presenting minorities and deviant perspectives. Furthermore, the characters were easily classified as male or female in both textbooks, because of their name or their appearance and either feminine or masculine features. For female characters, these features include for example long hair, eyelashes, wearing makeup, feminine clothing and facial features, body type and accessories. For males respectively, features such as short hair, no (apparent) makeup, masculine clothing and facial features, body type etc. for males.

## 4. Analysis

In this chapter, I will examine both the quantities and the qualities of the gendered characters presented in the two EFL textbooks by using content analysis as the method. Firstly, I will count the gendered characters that appear in the textbooks (section 4.1) and then examine what kind of societal and social roles they perform (sections 4.1 – 4.6), in order to examine the visibility of the two genders and then find out whether the roles and activities are distributed gender-stereotypically or if they aspire to represent gender-equal values.

### 4.1 Numbers of gendered characters

As stated above, the two textbooks are constructed in very different ways. *SM*, consisting principally of long main chapters, presents clear protagonists and minor characters, which on occasion reoccur in other contexts. *TC* consists of short texts and exercises, each of them presenting new characters. Due to these differences, *SM* features few characters in total whereas *TC* presents multiple characters, and there is also great difference in their importance.

In order to take these differences into account, the gendered characters were classified into three groups. Firstly, the central characters presented in the texts were counted. In this study, this term refers to principal characters and minor characters in *SM*. In *TC*, a principal character is mentioned by his or her name and a minor character is referred to with a common noun, such as *sister* or *partner*. Secondly, the gendered pronouns *he/she*, *him/her*, *his/her* and *himself/herself* were counted to achieve a wider perspective. Thirdly, the gendered characters in the illustrations were counted. Collective nouns, where the number of the members in the group is not specified, e.g. *ladies*, *men* or the names of musical groups, (e.g. *Coldplay TC 1.1*), were counted as one occurrence.

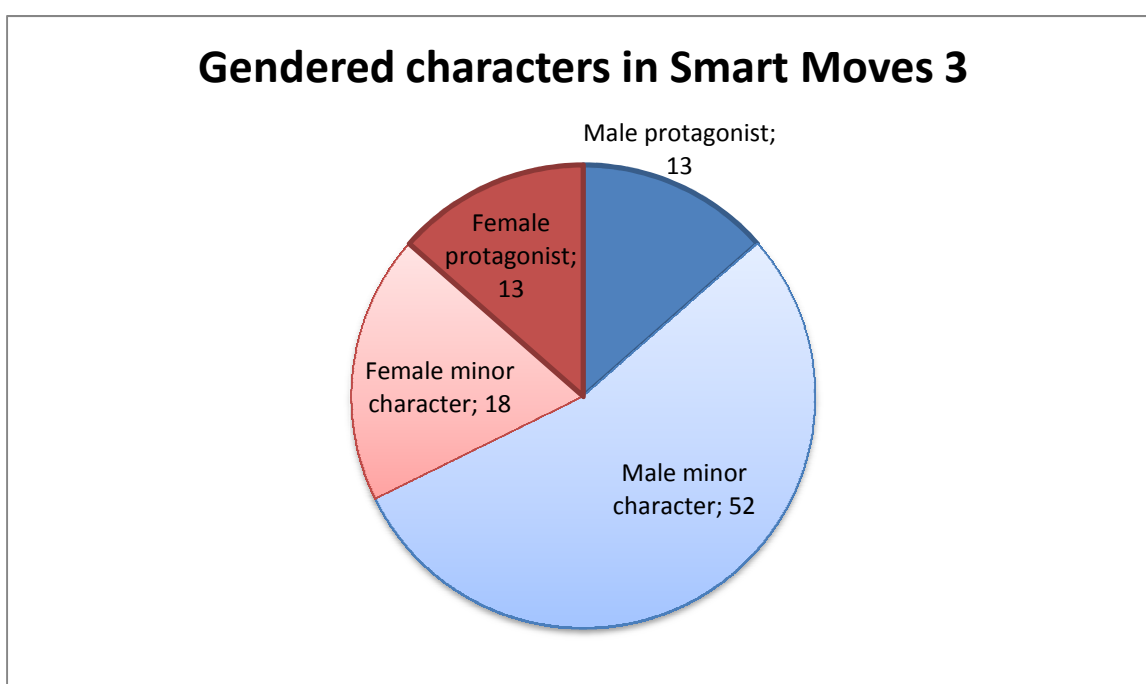
With regard to the illustrations, the visibility of gendered characters is studied from two perspectives: first independently and then in groups, i.e. more than one character illustrated in the

picture. The gendered characters in the texts and in the illustrations were chosen to be counted separately because in both textbooks some characters occur both in the texts and the illustrations and some characters are presented only in one of these categories, and occasionally the references between the texts and the pictures are not explicit: in *SM* the principal characters are without exception clearly presented in the illustrations as well, whereas in *TC* the connection between the text and the picture is not always explicit but the textbook usually presents more characters in the pictures.

#### 4.1.1 Central characters in the texts

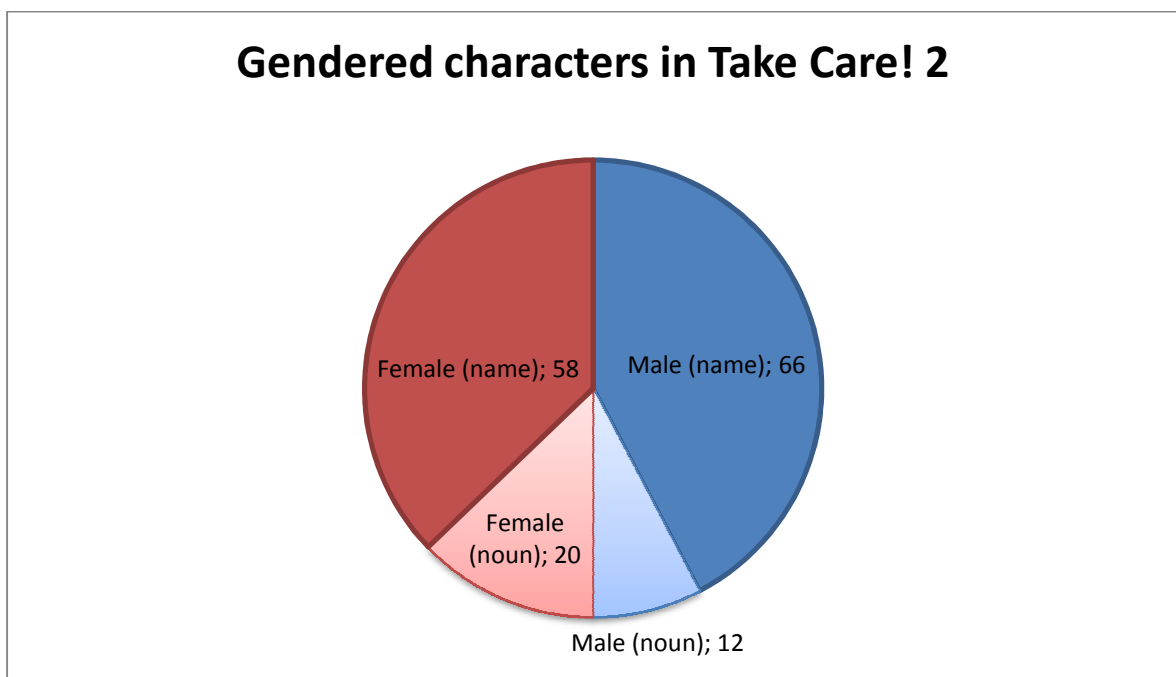
In *SM* there are 96 gendered characters in total; 65 of them are male characters (68 %) and 31 are female characters (32 %). Judging by these figures, *SM* is strongly dominated by male characters.

When put into groups according to the importance of the character, the numbers of the principal characters are equally distributed: there are 13 of both male and female characters. In this study, a principal character refers to the character who is presented as the topic of the text, possibly the narrator of the story, or a character who engages in a dialogue, i.e. presents a viewpoint. The percentages are illustrated below:



The inequality therefore lies in the minor characters; there are 52 male characters and 28 female characters presented in minor roles. This category includes characters that are mentioned by the principal characters (e.g. Natasha's husband, *SM* 7).

In *TC*, there are a total of 158 gendered characters that have a name or are referred to with a common noun. Of this total, 80 are male characters (51 %) and 78 instances are female characters (49 %). Therefore, the two genders can be considered equally represented. The principal characters, i.e. the named characters, consist of 66 male characters and 58 female characters. This means that the most important characters are almost equally represented as regards both genders, and there is no significant imbalance. As regards minor characters, i.e. the characters that are referred to by a common noun, there are 14 male characters and 20 female characters presented. Of the minor male characters 11 are referred to as members of the family (e.g. *dad*, *husband*), 2 are referenced to by their career (e.g. *boss*, *goal keeper*) and one occurrence is the collective noun *men*. Of the minor female characters, 13 are characterised by family membership (e.g. *wife*, *sister*), six by a noun referring to their gender (e.g. *woman*, *girl*) and one character is referred to as *partner*. The percentages are illustrated in the diagram below:

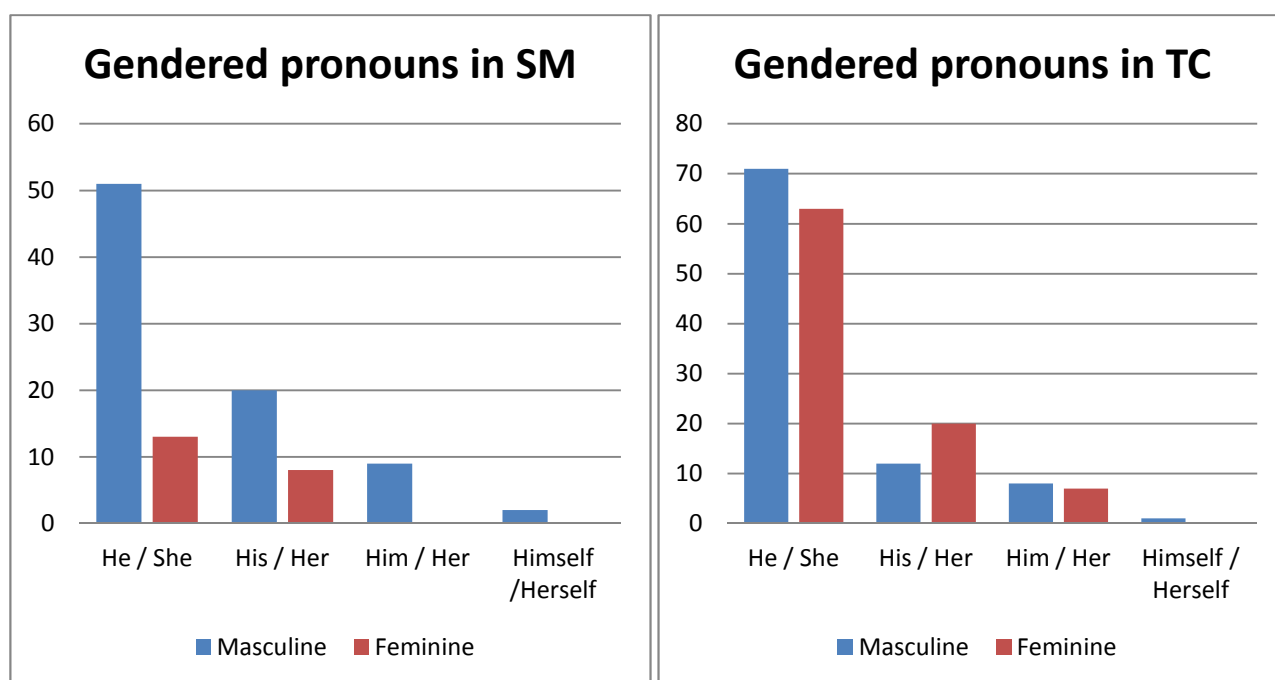




#### 4.1.2 Gendered personal pronouns

The gendered pronouns were counted to widen the perspective and support on the findings on the two genders with regard to central characters. In these calculations, all of the pronouns found in the textbooks were included. This means that, inevitably, some characters that were calculated in the previous section can be present in this section as well and this causes overlapping of certain characters. However, this method was chosen because while in *SM* a reference between a named character and the corresponding pronoun is clearly made, in *TC* it is generally not possible to determine how many times a character is referred to due to the way the textbook is compiled, i.e. example clauses, exercises and short texts.

With gendered pronouns, *SM* is clearly male-dominated. In the case of the nominative forms *he* and *she*, there are 64 occurrences in total, and 51 (80 %) are the masculine pronoun *he*, whereas *she* occurs only 13 times (20 %). For the possessive equivalents, *his* occurs 20 times (77%) and *her* 6 times (23%). The nouns that occur with *he* are for example *life*, *home*, *family*, *opinions*, *savings*, *crusade*, *first trip*, *house*, *birth* and *death*. For the feminine equivalent, nouns such as *story*, *uniform*, *books* and *album* occur. As for the object forms *him* and *her*, the masculine form occurs nine times and there are no occurrences of *her* in the object form. This applies for the forms *himself* and *herself*, as the masculine form appears on two occasions and the feminine equivalent is not mentioned at all. The numbers for both books are presented below.



In *TC*, from the total of 134 gendered pronouns, 71 were masculine and 63 were feminine pronouns. Thus, 53 % of the total is the masculine pronoun *he*, and the remaining 47 % consists of the feminine pronoun *she*, rendering an almost equal presentation of both genders. With regard to the other pronouns, the possessive pronouns are in favour of the feminine: there are 12 occurrences of *his* and 20 occurrences of *her*. Thus, this is the only category with female dominance of gendered pronouns in both books. Furthermore, the nouns that occur with these possessive pronouns are interesting: almost half of the occurrences of *her* involve family nouns (eight instances) and there are also 6 references to a body part, whereas *his* appears with the noun *friend* (five instances) and also nouns related to studies or occupation, such as *research* or *company* (four instances). To compare, the phrase *his grandfather* is the only occurrence of family with a masculine possessive pronoun. With regard to the object pronouns *him* and *her*, there are eight and seven occurrences respectively. Similarly to *SM*, there are no representations of *herself* and one occurrence of *himself* in *TC*.

#### 4.1.3 Numbers of gendered characters in the illustrations

In *SM*, there are 130 gendered characters presented in the images; 81 are male and 49 are female. Therefore, men clearly represent the majority (62 %) in the pictures, whereas women possess only a slightly larger visibility than one third (38 %).

There are 30 images of males pictured alone and the corresponding number for women is 22. Therefore, nearly half of the female characters presented in the illustrations are pictured alone in the image (49 %). Out of the 21 groups depicted in *SM*, there are six groups of exclusively males but there were no illustrations of groups of exclusively females. In the case of both genders represented in the illustration, there are eight images which present equal numbers of each gender, four male-dominant images and three female-dominant images. Thus, males and females can be equally represented in groups, women can be considered more independent than men.

In *TC*, there are 178 gendered characters presented in the images. 86 of these gendered characters can be identified as male (48 %) and 96 of them as female (52 %). When the gendered characters are pictured alone, the number of male characters portrayed is 28 (33 %) and the number of female characters is 39 (41%). Women are therefore more likely to be presented independently in the illustrations. Out of the 44 groups presented, there are eleven images of exclusively male characters and nine images of exclusively female groups. This is in stark contrast with the inexistence of female-only groups in *SM*. Furthermore, there are 16 images with groups of equal numbers of each gender. As regards imbalanced groups there were four male-dominated and four female-dominated groups. Not only are there equal numbers of them, even inside these groups themselves the numbers were evenly distributed (3 occurrences of 2:1 dominance and one occurrence of 3:1 dominance in favour of each gender).

To draw the findings on the visibility of the two genders, it can be concluded that in *SM* there are significantly more male characters (68 per cent) than female characters. In *TC* the gendered characters are almost equally presented (51% > 49%). In *SM*, the difference lies in minor characters,

as there are an equal amount of male and female principal characters. In *TC*, females seem to be more often referred to with a common noun than males but the difference is not very significant. Also, when common nouns are used to refer to the character, females are mostly referred to as members of the family or with a noun referring to their gender, whereas common nouns are generally seldom used for males, and when they are, they refer to family membership or career. With regard to personal pronouns and illustrations, they seem to support the findings on gendered central characters: in *SM*, masculine pronouns are clearly dominant, whereas in *TC* the occurrences of gendered pronouns are quite balanced. The visibility of the genders follows the same pattern in the illustrations, except for the complete absence of female-only groups in *SM*.

## 4.2 Occupations and wealth

### 4.2.1 Occupations and career

In *SM* as regards work environments, there are a total of 38 occupational instances presented. The dominance of the male gender is clearly evident as regards describing a character with his or her occupation: only 11 out of the 38 occupational instances are described in connection to female characters. Thus, from the total of 38 occupational role instances in *SM*, a significant number are male characters.

In *SM*, male characters work in various different fields which include sports, e.g. *soccer coach*, technology and science, e.g. *astronaut*, *engineer*, *electrician* and *doctor*, miscellaneous industrial workers, e.g. *factory employee* and *waste cleaner*, leadership positions, e.g. the *prime minister*, *chief of police*, *political leader*, *founder of a charity organization*, *headmaster* and *supervisor*, and also in the field of arts, e.g. *actor*, *director*, *cameraman*, *author*, *painter* and *musician*. Males are also presented financially powerful roles such as *entrepreneur* and *banker* and they are repeatedly illustrated wearing suits. A male can also be a *soldier* which is an occupation that includes fighting skills and physical strength, as well as mental perseverance amidst violent and

otherwise extreme conditions. These qualities are stereotypically possessed by the male gender only, and SM appears to further enforce the stereotypes. Notably, gender-differentiating terms *actor* and *actress* are used, while style guides currently encourage the usage of *actor*, as the term *actress* is associated with being inferior and less serious. Thus, judging by the representation of the male gender and occupational roles in the textbook, males often hold the stereotypical positions of power, wealth, danger, sports and technology and in addition they can perform artistic roles. It is also possible for a character to possess multiple roles. For example, Craig Kielburger (SM 9) can be seen as a founder of an organization, a global humanitarian and an entrepreneur among other things.

When looking at the 11 occupations mentioned in connection to women, four of them can be considered stereotypically strongly female-stereotypical careers: *teacher*, *housewife*, *flight attendant* and *secretary*. The occupations are in the field of education, nurturing and attending to other people's needs. In the case of *secretary* and *flight attendant*, their roles are working in a subordinate position and taking orders. Females can also choose creative occupations, such as *singer*, *actress*, *author* or *journalist*. Interestingly, the two journalists (SM 21: Deanna, SM 24: Erica), report male characters' views on issues which would stereotypically concern men: one on punk as a youth movement and style, another on the Prime Minister's suspicious conduct at a pub. As for the authors, both J.K. Rowling's and Val McDermid's topics include thriller and suspense, which can be seen to defy the traditional idea that women are to write about love and emotions. McDermid even employs female protagonists in her crime fiction.

As an attempt to widen the scope of occupations for women, a female doctor is presented in (SM 16). Curiously, when the female doctor's occupation is described, a male doctor is also presented as the character mentions her husband. This implies that when a woman is presented in a traditionally male occupation, she cannot be presented independently and needs to be supported by a male character. Furthermore, chapter 16, *Different jobs for different folks*, sparks a special interest to the present topic. In addition to the female doctor an *electrician* and a *flight attendant* are

presented. In a section labelled *Kiddie Talk*, which in this case means children's thoughts on a specific issue, the electrician is described as follows (*SM* pp. 74-76, my italics):

*He* goes to people's homes and changes the light bulbs.

*He* makes all the things at home electric. If the electricity runs out, *he* changes everybody's radiators.

*He* will stop people from being electrocuted.

Secondly, the female flight attendant is described as follows:

*She* is the helpful *lady* on the plane, a bit like *Mummy*. She gives food and sells chocolate bars. *Her* uniform is festive.

*She* flies, of course. Otherwise *she* wouldn't be able to stay up in the sky.

I think *she* looks a bit like a bird. At least, I don't think *she* looks after animals.

And finally, the third occupation, the doctor is described in the box:

*They* operate on bones, examine ears and you go there for maintenance every year.

*They* work on hospitals, and *they* have a hospital hat and loads of different tools.

*They* help people stay alive.

Therefore, it is implied that the two first occupations are considered exclusively male or female jobs but in case of being a doctor, the possibility of either one of the two genders possessing the job is implied by the use of the plural pronoun *they*. This is a clear example of stereotyping, as the pronoun *they* could have easily been used in the case of the electrician and the flight attendant as well. The stereotypes are further reinforced as both the female flight and the electrician describe their jobs to require good physical condition, but with differing purposes: for her to be able to care for the passengers and for him as the job is described as dangerous and life-threatening. To contrast the two occupations, the electrician's duty is to deal with situations of life and death, and the duty of the flight attendant is to bring pillows and make sure everyone is comfortable and travels pleasantly. Furthermore, the occupation of the flight attendant is feminised due to the choices of adjectives such as *glamorous* and *pleasant*, the importance of her appearance and the description of her as a mother-like figure.

In the working field in *TC*, only 13 occupational roles can be found in total, which is an interestingly low number, considering that there are many more characters in *TC* than in *SM*. For male characters, the seven occupations found are *office worker*, *boss*, artistic occupations such as *musician*, *painter/artist* and *cartoonist/producer*, and also *archaeologist* and *archaeological researcher*. Interestingly, there are as many as three (out of the total of seven) artistic occupations presented. In the case of the archaeologist, he possesses the title *Dr* and acts as a lead of his team, as does the character portrayed as *boss* as well. His achievements are also emphasized by listing them very specifically one by one (a master's degree, teaching post at a university, various researches, discovery of ancient cities and director of a tourist centre, *TC* p.64). Walt Disney also possesses multiple roles, as he is described as the founder and the owner of his company, an entertainer, a creator, an animator and a producer. He is thus a successful businessman and a creative genius at the same time.

For females, there are six occupations presented: *office worker*, *nanny* and later on *princess/humanitarian*, *painter*, *author*, *researcher* in an archaeological team and *doctor*. Judging by these representations, the female roles seem balanced, whereas the male roles are limited to one field. All the office workers and the researcher work in subordinate positions to male characters. The job of a nanny is a very stereotypical female role of the carer and also entails working as subordinate and a servant. The occupations of the researcher and the doctor are the only ones to break the stereotypes: they represent women in the field of science. It must be noted however that the female doctor is not very visibly presented: she appears in a small image in an exercise, her doctor's robe barely detectable. When a pupil connects the correct sentence to the image, the text signifies the woman as a doctor. The character of Diana can be seen as a woman's rise to power from a common citizen to a member of the royal family and, if interpreted this way, a sign of strong female empowerment.

Despite the scarcity of occupations presented in *TC*, there is one lesson that is specifically relevant for the current topic. In the lesson “At the office” (*TC* 3.4), both male and female office workers are presented. There are 11 male workers, whose tasks include installing software, having a meeting, writing down a message, signing papers and dealing with clients. The boss at the office is also male. There are 10 female workers, and their roles at the office are sending emails, making important calls, preparing things for a meeting, checking and signing documents, having a meeting, typing and paying attention. Therefore, both genders are almost equally represented in numbers, but there is a significant difference in their roles: a man is given the role of the leader (the boss), and men are the immediate representatives of the company (meet and deal with the clients) and take care of the technology. Women, on the other hand, are responsible for the mediated communication (making calls and sending emails) and the preparations for the meetings. Both genders are given written tasks and they have meetings among the employees, and sign papers. However, one female worker is presented performing the most insignificant task at the office: *paying attention*. This draws the attention to the implication that a special mention has to be given to a female performing this considerably mundane and passive role. The work ethic of the female workers is also characterized as follows:

Ben : [Were] you working hard?

Nilä: Not really. Most of the time I [was] listening to the radio.

Ben: Lucky you! I was installing new software. (*TC* p.48)

One female worker describes her busy day, emphasising that the women also work hard. On the other hand, the conversation can be seen as an implication that normally, the women do not work as hard:

Paula: I was so busy yesterday at work.

Mike: Why? What were you doing?

Paula: I was preparing everything for the meeting and then I was checking and signing lots of documents.

Mike: Wow! That was a hard day!

Paula: And that wasn't all. I was even making some important calls during the day. (*TC* p. 48)



In an exercise where the activities of the employees during the absence of the boss are discussed, the female employees choose to read magazines, cut their nails and eat. The men play cards. Thus, given the opportunity to perform whichever action they desire, the females choose reading, eating and enhancing their appearance, whereas the men incline to a competitive card game.

#### 4.2.2 Money and ownership

As regards wealth and gendered characters, there are three interesting cases in *SM*. In the ninth chapter a young man, Craig Kielburger, is presented as the founder of a charity organization. It is mentioned in the chapter that he has managed to raise millions of dollars for health care, sanitation and water for developing countries. Not only is Craig the owner and the founder of a financially successful company, he is also portrayed as an inspirational figure, a benefactor and a altruistic rescuer. Thus, success and power are strongly connected to masculinity and the character is given the stereotypically male role of the hero. On the other hand the stereotype is challenged by his line of work: helping and caring for others, which are traditionally considered female qualities. Therefore, the character can be seen as an example of challenging the gender boundary to the less typical direction: feminizing the male character.

Secondly, male leadership and business skills are further emphasised in chapter 16: the abovementioned male electrician owns his business and has established a leadership position and financial success with years of hard work. He is also described in a heroic way by emphasising his responsibilities and the dangers of his work. However, the reasoning in this case may be the general aim of the chapter: encouraging the pupils to think of ordinary careers as special and exciting.

Thirdly, the last chapter (*SM* 24) offers the pupils a different perspective on masculine power as it portrays a male leader in a strongly negative light. The prime minister can be identified male because of the use of pronouns *he* and *himself*. Thus, leadership and masculinity are again strongly connected. However, the character is portrayed as a public figure who has betrayed the trust of the

taxpayers and acted in a suspicious manner as regards financial issues. The negativity is evident from the use of nouns such as *scandal*, *fraud*, *suspect*, *crime*, *rumour* and *conspiracy* and the verbs *suspect* and *misuse*. In this case, male power does not always equal to a representation of success and a positive image.

In *TC*, money is involved on a few occasions. The act of purchasing products is performed both by males (buying airplane tickets, shopping) and females (shopping, looking for bargains, and buying flowers). Both genders are described shopping but the male seems to be in charge of purchasing expensive items and the female looks for cheap deals and inexpensive items. In lesson 1.3, there is a clear example of these gender-bound roles with regard to travel preparations: “My Mom is going to make hotel reservation and my Dad’s going to buy airplane tickets” (*TC* p.14). Thus, it is specifically stated that the father *buys*, whereas the mother *reserves*, i.e. does not trade actual money.

In addition to these, there are five illustrations in *TC* that portray men wearing suits. A suit most often signifies a working environment, and documents are also depicted in the illustrations, giving further evidence on the context. Women are pictured in two images, and in both cases, accompanied by two males. Thus, it is implied that women do not do business amongst themselves but they can participate in a business situation.

#### 4.3 Studying and education

As discussed in the theory section, education has an important role in achieving gender-equality, as it is the pathway to alleviate the gap between genders in working life and thus in society in general. Not all children in the world have the opportunity to go to school, and in less developed countries, gender is a factor which often decides if a child has the opportunity to attend school. Boys are sent to be educated in order to aim higher on the working field, and girls are to stay at home, learn to cook and take care of the household with their mothers. Thus, it is important to examine what kind

of message is conveyed about studying and education in the textbooks, especially because it is relevant to the pupils themselves at the moment.

In *SM*, there are twelve male pupils and six female pupils presented. Thus, 71 per cent of the pupils are male and 29 per cent are female. As regards the adults providing the education, there is one female teacher mentioned (*Mrs Booth*, *SM* 3) and one male headmaster (*Mr Jumbo Williams*, *SM* 6). Therefore, the male is presented stereotypically: superior to the female.

In chapter 3 of *SM*, two pupils, a boy and a girl, participate in a debate on environmental issues. The roles given for the characters can be considered to reinforce the stereotypes of women as the carers, in this case of the planet, and men as the representatives of technology and science. The girl is interested in the well-being of her family, the poor and also the biodiversity of the Earth. The boy sees the new technology as a means to help the poor, and something that one should not be afraid of. From the point of view of the discourse itself, the female character has longer lines and clearly leads the conversation. The male character even needs to inquire for a permission to speak by asking “Let me continue, will you?” (*SM* p. 15) The teacher who supervises the debate is female. Thus, the females are presented superior to the male but the viewpoints on the issue are stereotypically distributed.

In *TC*, there are eight male pupils and four female pupils mentioned. This means that 67 per cent of the pupils are male and 33 per cent are female. The school-related activities performed by male pupils include working with a report for school, studying abroad, skipping an exam and studying. As regards the female characters, they are described studying, taking an exam and copying the homework from another student. Both genders are thus described studying and making an effort but, on one occasion each, they also neglect their responsibilities. This could be considered as an attempt to challenge stereotypes and present girls as equally able or prone to disobey the rules as boys.

Another issue, which does not involve gendered *human* characters but is nevertheless relevant to the present analysis, is presented in the first chapter of *SM*. A new German invention, talking rubbish bin, is presented. It is stated that there are several different types of these waste disposal units but the two examples given in the text are clearly gendered. The feminine version is called *Susie Schlau* (Smart Susie) and she knows three languages. The masculine version is called *Siggy Sport*, which is a reference to a sports commentator: the bin yells *Goal!* when rubbish is put inside. The aim of the text is to form a positive image of recycling in the pupils' minds. Knowledge on languages is seen as a female virtue and therefore appealing to the female audience. Sport is considered a male interest; thereby the authors seek to earn the approval and respect of the male students. Siggy especially as a nickname could refer to a female but it is most often a variation of either *Siegfried* or *Sigmund* which are common German boys' names.

#### 4.4 Family and home life

At a first glance, family is not a prominent factor in either one of the books. This is most probably due to the fact that in today's society family is a complicated concept. In addition to the traditional nuclear family, there are single-parent households, reconstituted families, adoption etc. Furthermore, in some countries the nuclear family typically consists of the mother, the father and the children, whereas in other cultures this concept can also include the grandparents and other relatives. Although family can appear in various different forms in reality, neither *SM* nor *TC* present stepfamilies or same-gender parents. It can therefore be stated before the more detailed analysis that men and women are presented in their traditional roles in the family as fathers and mothers respectively. As discussed earlier in this thesis, other varieties of sexual orientation than the heterosexual norm are not represented in the textbooks.

For the purposes of this study, family relations were divided into two groups: biological relations (i.e. family ties through blood) and marriage as well as other love relations (i.e. relations

through agreement). Firstly, I will discuss the occurrences of the biological family relations, for example the occurrences of address terms *mother*, *son* or *cousin* and the representations of family as a unit. Secondly, I will present the references to love relations, i.e. address terms such as *wife*, *boyfriend* or *Miss*. Thirdly, the power relations found in the distribution of roles between the family members and household tasks in the family will be discussed.

#### 4.4.1 Biological relations

In *SM*, address terms to biological family members occur as follows: *father* (2), *mother* (1), *brother* (1) and *uncle* (1). Thus, 4 out of the 5 address terms (80 per cent) are references to males.

In addition to the address terms, there are three occasions where gendered characters are described as a family by specifying all the members: one occurrence of parents and two children (*SM* 8: Steve, Sharon, Jamie and Juliet) and two occurrences of parents and their son (*SM* 9: Iqbal and his parents; *SM* 7: Natasha, her husband and their son). The concept of nuclear family is clearly enforced and no deviant perspectives are presented. Judging by these representations of family as a unit, it consists of one male and one female parent, and there is a tendency to present sons rather than daughters, as there are three sons (Jamie, Iqbal and Natasha's son) and only one daughter (Juliet) presented. In addition to these clear cases, there are two ambiguous references to a family (*SM* 3: Carol and her family; *SM* 15 *Smart Talk*: a child and parents).

In *TC*, there are 18 occurrences of address terms referring to biological family members: *father* (6), *mother* (4), *brother* (4), *sister* (2), *son* (1) and *grandfather* (1). Therefore, 67 percent of the address terms refer to male and 33 percent to female characters.

Family as a unit is presented on two occasions in *TC*. In lesson 2.2, the family of Princess Diana is described with regard to three generations. Firstly, it is stated that she grew up with two sisters and one brother. Secondly, the text specifies her husband and their two sons. In these two families, both genders are equally represented as there are three sons and three daughters in total.

Curiously, the reference to their offspring is made with the possessive pronoun *her*. The reason for this may simply be because the topic of the text is Princess Diana, but it can also be seen to emphasise her role as a mother and as the principal caregiver and therefore enforcing the stereotypical gender roles. The other reference to a family unit is more ambiguous, as the gender of the child is unknown but the parents are clearly specified as a heterosexual couple with gendered address terms *Mom* and *Dad* (TC 1.3).

#### 4.4.2 Marriage and love relationships

As stated above, only heterosexual love relationships are presented in both of the textbooks. Even though marriage equality laws are and current issue all around the world and the number of countries accepting marriages between same-gender partners is steadily rising, it is fairly predictable that language textbooks have not developed hand in hand with the current political trends and therefore represent more or less archaic viewpoints.

In *SM*, there are two love relationships presented. In the *Smart Talk* section (*SM* p. 36), the father of the family Steve desires to discuss with his wife Sharon about a decision. Steve and Sharon are the only characters in *SM* who are referred to as *husband* and *wife*. He states:

*We* haven't made any plans for June so I don't see why that wouldn't work. Let me just ask *Sharon* to make sure. I'll call you back in a few minutes. (*SM* p. 36)

The husband Steve and the wife Sharon are therefore presented as equal partners in the relationship, as the pronoun *we* is used and it is emphasized that plans are made together. For decision making, he is required to consult his partner for her consent and opinion. The second reference to a character's marital status can be detected is in chapter 3, in which a character called *Mrs Booth* is the teacher in charge of a debate. Her marital status is explicit from the address term and it can be seen from the illustrations that she is a middle-aged character. Her character can be regarded as a prototypical example of a married and middle-aged female teacher.

In *TC* as regards address terms, *wife* and *husband* are both mentioned on one occasion each. The concept of marriage is mentioned on three occasions which involve four gendered characters in total. There are two occurrences of a divorced female. On one of these occasions, there is a reference to the former husband as well. Additionally, there is one reference to a woman who is married. Females are thus more often mentioned in the context of marriage (3 out of 4 characters).

Interestingly, *TC* presents three divorced couples (*TC* 2.2): Princess Diana and Prince Charles, Princess Diana's parents, and thirdly, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. According to the book therefore, divorce is not considered as abnormal and it could be argued that *TC* strongly challenges the traditional view of marriage as a holy and eternal agreement. Furthermore, in the short text on Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera (*TC* p. 29), their marriage is described to have been "extremely turbulent", which further questions the stereotype of marriage as an unbreakable contract. In the case of Diana and Charles, the male is put in the power position over the female as it is specifically stated that "Prince Charles announced their separation" (*TC* p. 28). The dynamic of the relationship thus is in the possession of the male.

In *TC*, love is also one of the topics of the lessons. In lesson 4.2, there are three couples described in the text who fall in love when they see each other. The activities performed by the male characters are driving, shopping at the mall and having coffee, and the women are described crossing the street, shopping at the mall and buying flowers. Thus, shopping at the mall seems to be considered gender-neutral by *TC*, whereas buying flowers and driving are gender-stereotypically distributed.

#### 4.4.3 Roles in the family and household tasks

In chapter 7 of *SM*, the storyteller Brad recollects his visit at his uncle Steve's home in Florida during a hurricane scare. Therefore Brad, Steve and his family needed to prepare for the possible storm as follows:

First, I helped him and Jamie to install storm shutters on the windows. [...] Next, we filled containers with water. Eventually, we had enough water to last us all a week, 35 gallons (= 132 litres). [...] After that we removed the TV antenna and satellite dish from the roof and made sure that the family car was in the garage. [...] It was already raining when we moved inside.

Aunt Sharon and Juliet had stocked the hallway with mattresses, water, batteries, flashlights, medications and a portable radio. (*SM* 7, p.39)

The tasks for the characters in preparation for the hurricane are clearly divided into masculine and feminine jobs. According to this extract, the men of the family, Steve, his son Jamie and Brad are responsible for the tasks outside and on the roof, as well as the tasks that require technical skills or physical strength, i.e. filling the water containers. Also storing the car which is most often seen as symbol of power and masculinity is their duty. The men are also described to reach the hurricane-safe room on the last minute, whereas the female characters are already there with the utilities. The men are thus described to defy the storm and be in more danger when the women already reside in the safe room of the house in good time. Sharon and Juliet's task can also be seen to be the carers and the nurturers: they have compiled "a nest", a temporary home for the family, with mattresses and other useful smaller items that do not require heavy lifting.

Another similar kind of stereotypical role is given to Natasha in chapter 7 of *SM*. She states that she sent her son to school "as usual". This implies that she, as the mother and the carer of the family, is normally the one who takes care of the offspring, in this case their only son. She also states that her husband went to the barber's and she stayed at home, which could imply that she is a housewife, which is a traditional female role: the carer of the family.

Judging by the findings presented above, household tasks therefore seem to be stereotypically divided into male and female duties in *SM*. However, some interesting exceptions arise with regard to cleaning tasks. There are three male characters illustrated in blue overalls and with rubber gloves on their hands (*SM* 4, *SM* 5). The topic is recycling and protecting the planet. It could be suggested that the stereotypical view of cleaning as a feminine task is challenged. However, the type of cleaning the male characters perform is not the usual household cleaning job: it is clearing the Earth



of waste. Furthermore, in chapter 5 there is a male character presented: Rudy the litter fairy. His gender is evident from the use of the pronoun *he* and the illustrations present him with a feature normally identified as masculine: a beard. On the other hand, Rudy is also feminised because he has pink wings, traditionally associated with fairytales for female audiences. It could be concluded that the purpose is thus to break the stereotypical image of a “cleaning lady” although the type of cleaning is presented as a heroic duty of saving the planet from a threat. This depiction is far removed from the feminine image of cleaning and therefore SM implies that there is a difference between the cleaning performed by each gender. In addition to challenging gender roles by presenting male cleaners, a woman is illustrated holding a drill in the second chapter (SM p. 10). The illustration implies that women can, after all, take a traditionally masculine technical role.

In lesson 3.3 of *TC*, two women are illustrated performing household tasks: one is cooking and the other one putting plates on the table. There is also a man illustrated sitting lazily in front of the computer and according to the caption, the male character is “wasting time” (*TC* p 46). In the text, it is stated:

Leila: I was cooking because we were waiting for some guests.

Jenny: Was your brother helping?

Leila: Are you kidding? He was playing X-box as usual.

Jenny: Who was helping you then?

Leila: My Mom was setting the table while I was cooking. (*TC* p. 46)

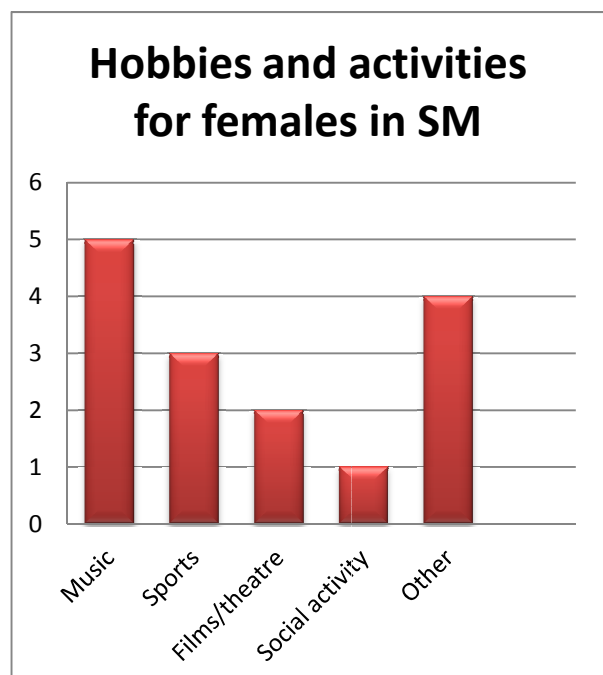
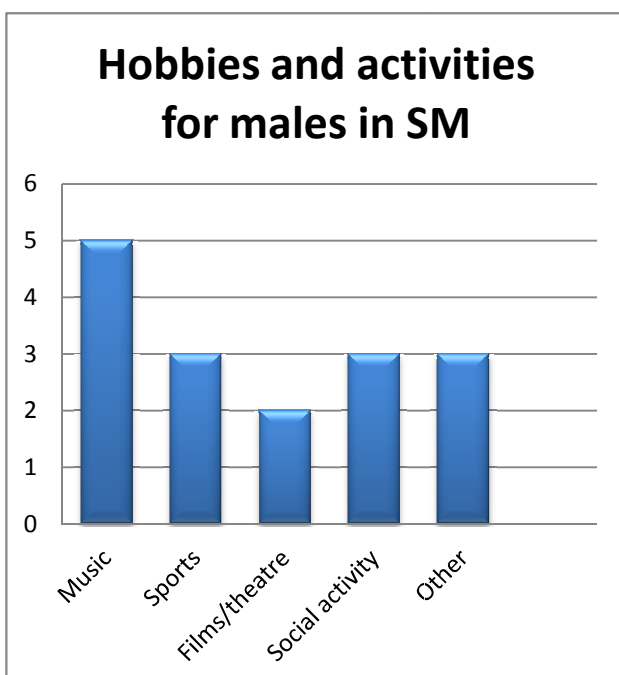
It is therefore implied that while women prepare a meal, men do not normally prepare food or help in the process at all: they wait around for the meal to be served. In another lesson, there is an exercise in which a woman cooks, the mother brings the cake and a man goes to work (*TC* p. 63). In lesson 4.4, there is an exercise in which the pupil’s task is to fill in the missing words from a text. The topic of the text is a woman who cooks dinner and bakes a cake at the same time as she studies English. Therefore it is strongly implied in *TC* that the kitchen is a female territory and thus the roles are distributed stereotypically. The stereotypical household tasks performed by males are fixing computers and painting a room. These tasks are in the field of technology and physical effort.

When getting ready to leave the house, the text describes the woman getting dressed while the role of the man is to call a taxi (*TC* p. 62). However, in the illustration a man is also pictured getting dressed. The only boundary-breaking case in *TC* as regards household tasks is represented by a male character who wraps presents (*TC* p.62).

#### 4.5 Hobbies and free time

In this section, the hobbies and free time activities performed by the gendered characters were calculated and categorized into groups in order to facilitate comparing the findings on a general level. As the diagrams and categories were formed depending on the findings in the books, they differ from one another. There were also a few illustrations of characters performing music and/or dancing, which were not included in the calculations, as it was not possible to discern whether the activity is for leisure or work.

In *SM*, from the total of 31 references to free time activities, of which 16 occurrences involve male characters and 15 involve female characters. The types of activities were categorized into five groups: *films/theatre*, *social activities*, *sports*, *music* and *other*. The findings are demonstrated in the diagrams below:



The diagrams illustrate that the same categories could be applied to both male and female characters, and the first three groups are equally performed by both genders and the small differences in numbers occur in the last two categories, i.e. *social activity* and *other*.

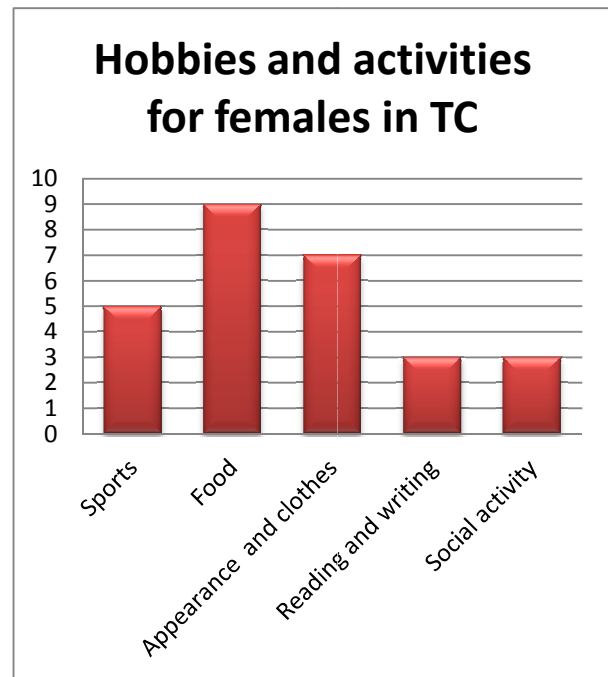
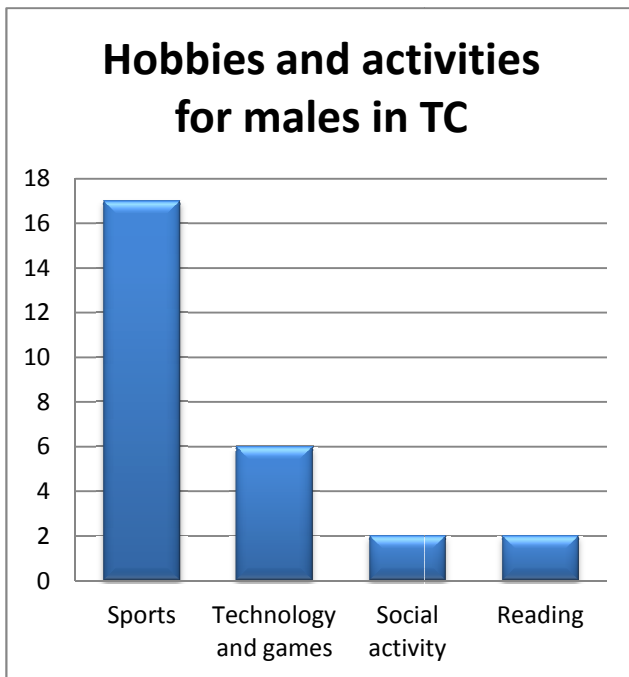
Music was found the most common hobby for the gendered characters in *SM*. Both males and females are pictured playing instruments and there are several occasions where music, playing or listening to it, is the topic of a conversation among gendered characters. However, in chapter 20 there is an interesting difference between the preferences of males and females as regards listening to music. When two female and two male characters present their favourite albums of all time, the male characters are in favour of all-male bands and the two female characters present solo artists, of which one is male and one is female. Thus, it can be concluded from this that it is appropriate for females to be in favour of the music by both genders, but male characters are restricted to praise music created by male artists, with a special preference of all-male groups. Thus, the artists admired by the characters are in clear imbalance according to their gender eleven males as opposed to one female.

The second most common hobby in *SM* is sports. One male character is presented performing parkour, which is described as having “no strict rules” and requiring strength (*SM* 10). The dangerous nature of the hobby is emphasized in the illustration in which the boy is seen jumping from a high ledge. However, the boy describes getting his hands dirty as the worst thing about his hobby, therefore breaking the stereotype of boys not caring about cleanliness. In my opinion, this is possibly one of the clearest examples of aspiring to step over the boundary from masculinity to femininity, as according to previous studies the shift rarely occurs to this direction. Other sports presented for male characters are soccer and break dance which could be regarded as the most masculine variety of a stereotypically feminine hobby. For female characters, the physical activities presented are circus acrobatics, dancing and going for a walk. From these, the circus acrobatics is given a similar description to parkour. The adventurous aspect and the requirement for physical

effort is emphasised as it is stated: “there’s always a danger of injury. I’ve torn my ankle ligaments a few times, and some of my mates have even broken their legs” (*SM* 10). Therefore, circus acrobatics is given more credibility as a sport, rather than a type of dance, thus aspiring to present it to require masculine qualities: strength and risk-taking, in comparison to the female-stereotypical and less-extreme pastimes of dancing and going for a walk.

As regards the topic of films and theatre, the views of the gendered characters are rather stereotypically presented. In a *Smart Talk* exercise (*SM* p. 91), a male and a female character discuss a film they just watched. The female character expresses her appreciation of the visual characteristics of the film, and her lack of interest for the action scenes. The boy on the other hand thinks that the “chase at the beginning was so exciting”. He also states that the performances by both the female and the male protagonist were good and jokingly states that he particularly enjoyed the beauty of the scenes where the female protagonist is involved. The girl continues the playful chat by stating: “Well, you’d like any film with Keira Knightley”, hereby putting more emphasis on the physical appeal of the actress. The female actress is thus presented as an object of male desire.

In *TC* there are more characters presented in total, and the number of activities presented in the textbook is considerably higher and also more varied as opposed to *SM*. In total, there are 54 occurrences of hobbies and free time activities. 27 of them are performed by male characters and 27 activities are performed by female characters. The hobbies were categorized into five groups in order to draw general conclusions:



As demonstrated by the diagrams, the categories differ between the two genders in TC, whereas in *SM* the hobbies could be categorized under the same umbrella terms regardless of gender. As a side note, the occurrences in *TC* are clearly more of the category of a (single) free time activity, rather than a recurring hobby, as in *TC* there is less additional information provided about the context, and most activities are mentioned in one sentence without much context.

The most clearly hobby-type activities in *TC* belong to the sports category. There are 17 male characters and only five female characters presented performing some kind of physical activity. Thus, men dominate the category, which follows the stereotype of masculinity and power. Men are described playing various kinds of team sports (e.g. soccer, football and baseball), individual sports (e.g. athletics and snowboarding), water sports (e.g. surfing, sailing and swimming), billiards, tennis, boxing and car racing. Almost all of these activities are competitive sports, some of them even violent and dangerous, and this is enforced by the illustrations. Some of them can naturally be performed without necessarily competing (e.g. surfing and swimming). Men are also described watching a match and resting, which require less effort but were classified as part of the physical activity category. The activities performed by women include kayaking, diving, running, walking in the park and yoga. The notion of sports being a masculine pastime, is clearly emphasized in lesson

4.1 which introduces six of the abovementioned sports involving eight male characters, but no females at all. One female character is presented kayaking and diving, and the remaining three female sports available are running, walking (in the park) and yoga. The latter three sports can be considered low-effort, calm and “easy”, i.e. stereotypically female activities. Only the first character mentioned, (Amanda, *TC* 1.3), is given an adventurous and possibly dangerous sport. The feminine activities presented in *TC* do not involve competition, as opposed to the masculine counterparts, most of which are clearly competitive sports. It is evident that, firstly, there are fewer sports available for women, and secondly the activities are of a very different type than for the men.

As for other types of free time activities in *TC*, the male characters are interested in spending their free time with technology for the most part. By contrast, women are presented cooking or shopping on several occasions, and they are also often mentioned performing a task in order to enhance their appearance. Male characters are never mentioned doing any activity that would have a connection to their appearance, such as buying clothes or preening themselves. In lesson 1.4, where the topic of shopping and bargaining is introduced, there are no men in the illustrations as opposed to seven females. When the activity of reading is mentioned, the man reads a newspaper (important and formal content) and the woman reads a magazine (informal content). A male character is also never described eating: all food or kitchen-related household tasks are for females. Moreover, the only time when a male character prepares food, it is described as an obligatory and laborious task, or something that he would not normally do or in this case, would not like to do (vacation). Women are also often given social roles: they talk, have guests and call on the phone (5 occasions). The social activity mentioned to be performed by males is visiting grandparents (2 occasions).

#### 4.6 Popular culture

In this section, I will discuss the findings on popular culture (music, films, literature etc.) and famous characters presented in the textbooks. Their importance for the present analysis is not to be ignored, as popular culture influences the pupils' opinions and affect their thoughts outside classroom environments. These characters can provide motivation towards the subject as they attract the pupil's interest so that they would want to know what is said about the person or the phenomena. After all, new information is acquired on the basis of existing knowledge and popular icons are important to the pupils as role models.

In *SM*, there are there are five musical groups presented that consist of four male musicians each (*SM* 20: *U2*, *The Beatles*; *SM* 21: *The Ramones*, *The Clash*, *The Sex Pistols*). In addition to the male-only bands, there is one musical group presented which consists of a female lead singer and four male musicians (*SM* 21: *Blondie*). Thus, all-female groups are non-existent and there is only one female member in the six musical groups. With regard to solo artists, the male rap artist *Eminem* and the female artist *Madonna* are presented in chapter 20. Thus, in total there are 25 famous male musicians and only two famous female musicians presented in *SM*. Not only are female musicians clearly outnumbered by male musicians but they are the object of ridicule from a male point-of-view. The artist *Madonna* is described by a female fan in chapter 20:

*My dad* called this great artist "Minnie Mouse on helium" and demanded that I turn down the volume of great songs like "Express Yourself" and "Cherish". (*SM* p. 100)

The father's opinion of *Madonna* implies that he does not consider her an artist that could be taken seriously and would be a significant member of the music industry. The talents of the female artist are ridiculed by the father and his preference of not listening to her songs is explicitly stated. Music is a topic of several chapters in *SM*, and both females and males are illustrated playing instruments and dancing. According to the illustrations, different musical genres seem to be stereotypically presented. In addition to the male rock bands presented above, rap and hiphop artists as well as breakdancers are male (see illustrations on pp. 87, 107 & 101), punk is described in chapter 21 from

the viewpoint of a male, and on the other hand, pop music is presented by the female artist Madonna.

In the field of literature, *SM* presents the authors Val McDermid, J.K. Rowling and Shakespeare as well as Robert Louis Stevenson. In the illustrations of the main chapters, there is also a painting by J.M.W. Turner and from the film industry, actors Daniel Radcliffe, Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo and Edna Purviance are presented.

Curiously, when there is a female writer or actor presented (and praised) in the text or in the images, there is a man mentioned later in the text or presented in an illustration. For example, after presenting J.K. Rowling and her merits, it is followed by a mention of William Shakespeare, and the chapter on the writer Val McDermid includes her citing Robert Louis Stevenson as her favorite author. The men can thus be seen as presented in the background whenever a woman is put in the spotlight, as was discovered in the case of the female doctor in chapter 16 as well. The female character is thus never presented alone even though the numbers of the famous characters seem to be roughly the same. In chapter 19, the Indian equivalent of Hollywood, Bollywood, is introduced. When making a reference to the main character and the hero of the stories, the pronoun *he* is used, bluntly ruling out women and suggesting that the heroes are always male.

Another interesting detail in *SM*, presented in the very last chapter on the news and media, is a box of headlines from the history of media. There are nine headlines presented, of which five include a name of a famous historical character: Gutenberg, Mr Bell, Hitler, Martin Luther King and Neil Armstrong. All of the headlines present important achievements, e.g. landing on the moon, and all of these people performing the actions are male. Admittedly, in the past, women were not given opportunities and equal positions with men, but in my opinion the dominance of men in the headlines could have easily been balanced with mentions of women such as Marie Curie, for example, but the editors have decided a hegemonious approach with males as inventors, heroes and inspirational leaders.



In *TC*, there are two musical groups of exclusively male members mentioned (*TC* 1.1: Coldplay, Guns ‘n’ Roses,), one legend of the movie industry (Walt Disney, *TC* 2.2) and a character of children’s tales (Santa Claus, *TC* 4.3). By contrast, there are only two female characters mentioned: the princess Lady Diana Spencer and Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (*TC* 2.2). Frida Kahlo is considered one of Mexico’s most famous thinkers and visual artists and she is also an icon of a liberated and independent Mexican woman. Lady Diana can be seen as the equivalent from the British culture. Therefore, with these women, the native and the foreign/ goal culture are presented. Notably, both of these extraordinary women are described also through the men in their life: with Frida Kahlo, her husband Diego Rivera is almost always mentioned even though Frida was eventually more famous, and Diana would not be the heroine of the nation if it were not for her marriage to Charles. With Diana, also her sons are mentioned. It could be concluded therefore, that in *TC* as well as in *SM* (e.g. the female doctor and her husband), when females are brought forward as important or inspirational, the male characters in their lives are also constantly present. As if the female required a male figure as a “supporting character”.

## 5. Discussion

In this chapter, I will seek to answer the research questions presented at the beginning of this thesis. I will further compare the findings in the two textbooks to one another and discuss the textbooks in relation to the differing cultural backgrounds, goals and legislation established in the theory section.

Firstly it should be stated that while gender and gender roles are represented in many ways in the textbooks, there are no deviant manifestations of gender representation presented outside the binary male-female gender view. The genders of the characters are generally explicitly characterized either male or female by e.g. their names, clothes and appearance. Furthermore, the characters are presumably without exception heterosexual, as marriage and love only occurs between a male and a female partner. Thus, the textbooks fail to present gender as a varied and multifaceted concept which should not be the case considering the goals of equality defined by the United Nations and also the legislations of Finland and Mexico.

When looking at the visibility of the two genders, it is evident from the findings that the Finnish textbook presents the male character as the dominant gender when examining the numbers of central characters. In *SM*, the percentage of male protagonists is 68, and in *TC* the equivalent number is 51 %. According to these percentages, *TC* can be characterized as efficiently promoting gender-equality. Even though in *SM* there are equal numbers of protagonists, the female minor characters are significantly underrepresented. In *TC*, women are slightly more often referred to with a common noun than men, which marks them as characters of less importance, but nevertheless, this difference is very small compared to the striking imbalance found in *SM*. Masculine pronouns also dominate feminine pronouns in *SM*, as for example 80 per cent of their nominative forms consist of the masculine pronoun *he*. Again, for *TC* the masculine pronouns are found more often but the difference is less prominent (53 percent to 47 percent for the nominative forms). In the illustrations, 62 percent of the gendered characters consist of males and in *TC* the tables are turned and men form

the minority of the illustrated characters (48 % to 52 %). In *SM*, men are more prone to being portrayed in groups, especially amongst themselves. In *TC*, women are portrayed alone and as regards groups, both genders are equally represented. This is in stark contrast with the non-existence of exclusively female groups in *SM*.

The social roles in *SM* were on occasion even surprisingly overtly stereotypical, as was the case with the careers for men and women in *SM*. Profession and occupation seemed to be the topic that rendered the most stereotypical portrayals in both books, as men were illustrated wearing business attire whereas women are not, and in *TC* the tasks at the office were also distributed according to the stereotypical view. As regards roles in the family, the very few representations found in the analysis consist of nuclear families of heterosexual couples in both textbooks. When a reference to a family member is made, males dominate clearly (*SM* 4 out of 5, *TC* 2 out of 3). *SM* presents one female character with the address term *Mrs.*, signifying her marital status. *TC* seems to be more developed in this aspect. It presents divorced characters on a few occasions, therefore offering an alternative for the nuclear family model. In each of the two textbooks, the words husband and wife are mentioned on one occasion.

The theoretical framework also suggested that women are more likely to be presented in masculine roles, than men in feminine roles. This was found to be true in the textbooks as well. In both textbooks, women can possess traditionally masculine occupations, such as the doctor, but men are not found in feminine occupational roles. The scope of the roles for men is still narrow and limited, while female empowerment can be seen in the widening scope of female roles. Thus, widening the scope for men as well would be the next step in the struggle for equality. With regard to leadership and power, men are clearly portrayed in the powerful and physically challenging roles, and they often hold the superior position to women, such as the leader of a team or the headmaster.

In the theoretical background it was stated that Finland is a strongly feminine society whereas Mexico is to a great degree a masculine society and the characterization for these types of society

were established. Finland, among the other Nordic countries, is seen as a country where gender equality is emphasized and considerably developed, and Mexico as a Latin American country is often connected to *machismo*. Therefore, it was presumed that the Mexican textbook would present a more hegemonious and traditional view of gender. Also, due to the variety of rules and regulations in different states and schools in Mexico, and the subsequent lack of specifically nationwide guidelines for gender representation in textbooks, it could have been assumed that the Mexican counterpart would reflect its *machismo* culture and stereotypical views more explicitly, rather than the values presented in the official documents. This assumption can however be concluded generally untrue based on the findings of the analysis: the numbers of gendered characters were found more equally presented than in *SM*, and blatantly *macho* characters were non-existent. The visibility of both genders was exceptionally balanced in *TC*, in comparison to the clear male-dominance in *SM*. The stereotypical roles of gender representation established in the theoretical framework persist in both textbooks, but *SM* seems to employ the *hidden curriculum* more strongly than the Mexican counterpart. For example, the occupational roles of the engineer, flight attendant and the doctor presented in *SM* clearly reinforce the stereotypes, explicitly with the use of the personal pronouns. On the other hand, *TC* also presents stereotypical views, but as the texts are shorter, the ideas conveyed cannot be emphasised as profoundly as in *TC*. It could be concluded that the masculine and feminine roles were found *on average* similar in both textbooks, as both books presented both deviant and stereotypical roles, and either one of the books presented exaggeratedly archaic views on gender.

## 6. Conclusions

The principal aim of this thesis was to find out how gender is represented in two EFL textbooks designed for learners from two distinct cultures, and examine if they meet the goals of gender equality defined by national laws and the United Nations. Gender stereotyping was specifically established as a hindrance to the goals of equality and it should therefore be avoided both in classroom environments as in learning materials. On the basis of this study, neither one of the textbooks can be considered completely free of gender stereotypes. Various kinds of gender roles are presented in the books, but as the roles for females are occasionally found to break the gender gap, the roles for males still seem to remain very limited. It can be argued however that avoiding stereotypes altogether is not possible, and they are indeed an important factor in the development of gender identity, and in order to support the development, the roles and representations should be as varied as possible rather than straightforwardly aspiring to erase them.

As it was stated in the theoretical background, in the world of today gender-equality remains unreached. This applies to even the most “developed” countries, to which Finland can be considered belonging. As a prediction the Finnish textbooks should have been more gender-equal than the Mexican equivalent, if the books would have reflected the situation in the society in general, as Finland is regularly cited as one of the most equal countries as regards gender. However, according to the analysis, this is not the case. Both *SM* and *TC* are gender-equal and gender-stereotypical to a varying degree and no significant contrast can be detected between the textbooks. On a general level, both textbooks present stereotypically male and female characters in stereotypical roles, but on the other hand, they also employ some deviant portrayals as well. In my opinion, it could be stated that *TC* maintains a more stable viewpoint throughout the book, whereas *SM* features slightly stronger stereotypical representations on occasion, but also clearer attempts to break the conventions than *TC*. This is most probably due to the significantly lower number of population in

Finland, as well as the possibility to compose specific laws and guidelines that apply to the entire country, rather than a single state as part of a geographically immense nation. Neither one of the books fully reach the goals of gender equality cited in their laws and development plans for education. Especially, the roles for men are in need of a significant amount of variety and interchangeability, for example including more nurturing occupations and tasks for male characters.

A problematic issue for drawing conclusions between the two books was the dissimilarity in the layout and construction of the two textbooks. The short texts in *TC* do not provide many possibilities for deeper character analysis and description, whereas the detailed descriptions in *SM* result in less variety and selection. Another challenge for the present thesis is the inclusion of several scientific fields into one (language and linguistics, education and gender studies) and also adding the international perspective. Therefore, the theoretical framework was complicated to compile on all the different fields, which means that profound background information is difficult to include.

Also, as it was stated in the theory section, the present analysis is limited to the contents of the textbooks, and there are of course a variety of other factors present in the learning situation, such as the teacher, the pupils and the physical space for example. The teacher possesses the power to include and omit contents, as well as conveying his or her own ideas, which can change the meanings of the contents of the learning material to a great degree.

Considering the scope of the present master's thesis, only two textbooks were included in the analysis. Due to this, it is not possible to draw general and wide-ranging conclusions about the similarities and differences of gender representation in textbooks designed for the cultural environments of Finland and Mexico. Nevertheless, the thesis provides us with one example on comparing two very differing cultural backgrounds and it can be concluded that the representations of gender are surprisingly similar in the education materials analysed in this thesis despite their significantly differing cultural backgrounds. This study could therefore be continued by including

several textbooks or the perspective of the workbook as well, in order to draw more general conclusions. Also, it would be interesting to focus on the discourses of the gendered characters to see whether they represent similar views on gender to the findings on the contents in this thesis.

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